

HE'S NAFF, HE'S BLAND - AND HE'S BACK
Gary Barlow is the new Cliff Richard

THE EYE

HAVING A LITTLE, JUGGLING A LOT
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Is Dawn French every woman's role model?

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Newspaper of the Year for photographs

THE INDEPENDENT

Monday 16 March 1998 45p No 3,559 *

Brown set to soften middle class attack

Exclusive

By Colin Brown
and Diane Coyle

GORDON Brown will delay for at least a year plans to tax child benefit in his Budget tomorrow after intervention by Tony Blair to ease the expected £1bn squeeze on the middle classes who helped to give Labour its landslide victory last May.

The Prime Minister spent Friday at Chequers going through the Chancellor's Budget plans and informed sources have told *The Independent* he personally watered down some of Mr Brown's proposals to avoid alienating the middle classes. "Tony is a moderate and they spent Friday with Gordon's enthusiasm for radical change being overridden by Tony's political nous," said the Government source.

Mr Brown will boost spend-

on health and education, but will reinforce his reputation as the "Iron Chancellor" today by announcing legislation requiring more openness from the Treasury in future about spending and taxation calculations.

Petrol, cigarettes and alcohol will all be hit by big hikes in duty by the Chancellor, with an expected 27p on a gallon of fuel as part of a "green" environmental agenda. But the new green taxes on motorists and the green belt, including car-parking at out-of-town supermarkets, will be delayed for 12 months.

There will be an £80m boost for the arts, with £40m to scrap charges at the Victoria & Albert museum, the Imperial War Museum, and the National Maritime and Science museums.

Taxing child benefit for those on the 40 per cent higher rate of income tax could go ahead next year to finance a £70m increase in spending on measures to reduce unemployment

and poverty. Mr Brown has also put this right on scrapping mortgage tax relief, which he has reduced to 10 per cent, in spite of Mr Blair's fears about impacting the middle classes.

The centrepiece of the Budget will be the £1bn Working

Families Tax Credit, to be introduced in April next year, at the same time as taxing child benefit with an uprating to sweeten the pill. Childcare Credit will replace Family Credit to help low-income families by making sure work pays, but it will not be as generous as recent reports suggested, leaving Harriet Harman, the Secretary

of State for Social Security, with a tough job in selling the package. The moves will have a mixed effect with childcare costs; *The Independent* is campaigning for a tax allowance for all working mothers to help with childcare.

The Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Rev James Jones, warned the Chancellor against forcing mothers to work. "We must recognise parenting is work," he said.

Mr Brown has long had child benefit in his sights, but Baroness Castle, the veteran Labour campaigner, and John Edmonds, the union leader,

who will today lead a mass lobby of Parliament to defend the welfare state both warned that it could hit women who are now taxed separately. The new low-starting rate of income tax of 10p in the pound for the low paid will be announced for next year.

Today Mr Brown will set out

plans to bind himself and successors to prudent fiscal policies, making sure future governments are legally required to set out clear rules for tax and spending policies and stick to them with a "Code for Fiscal Stability". He is determined to make sure no government can

play fast and loose with tax payers' money.

Clauses in the Finance Bill following tomorrow's Budget will form the legal basis for a code requiring every government to publish its own fiscal rules and supporting documentation. The fiscal code will be based on five principles: transparency, economic stability, responsible tax and spending policies, fairness and efficiency. According to a source in the Treasury, "For too long fiscal policy has been conducted behind closed doors." Which leads to believe, page 8

David Walker, page 15

Woman tells of gropes in Oval Office

By Mary Dujeky
Washington

ILL CLINTON looked set to experience one of the darkest hours of his presidency last night, when a former White House employee, Kathleen Willey, claimed on prime-time television that he kissed and groped her in the vicinity of the Oval Office four years ago. The alleged incident, originally recounted by Ms Willey in testimony given in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case

last year, has been strongly denied by Mr Clinton, including under oath.

Mr Clinton's version is that he did embrace Ms Willey, who he said was "extremely agitated", but that there was "nothing sexual" about it. The contested incident occurred on 29 November, 1993.

Don Hewitt, executive producer of the programme, CBS network's flagship "60 Minutes", said after recording the interview that Ms Willey, who is now 51, came over as highly credible. Her account occu-

pied 40 minutes of the programme and – unusually for American television – a nine-minute segment was said to have run completely uncut.

Ms Willey was expected to repeat her charges that Mr Clinton embraced her in "more than just a platonic hug", tried to kiss her on the lips, and placed her hand on his genitals, which she said were "aroused".

Although the lurid details have figured in US press reports of Ms Willey's accusations in recent days, they gained a new and shocking immediacy by coming

from the alleged victim herself. Additionally devastating for Mr Clinton is that Ms Willey is seen unlike a number of Mr Clinton's accusers as a mature woman of good character who has not hitherto sought publicity or redress. With her late husband, she was a fund-raising member of the Democratic Party and an enthusiastic supporter of the President.

Sixty Minutes injected only one element of doubt into Ms Willey's version, producing a woman who said she had been asked by Ms Willey to lie about

the Oval Office encounter. But this did little to detract from the emotional force of Ms Willey's first-person account.

The interview came at the end of a weekend that began equally disastrously for the President with the release of a 700-page legal dossier that included the transcripts of statements and testimony given by Ms Willey and four other women who have been linked with Mr Clinton during his political career. The dossier was compiled by lawyers for Paula Jones, the woman who claims

Mr Clinton propositioned her for oral sex in an Arkansas hotel room six years ago, in an attempt to demonstrate a "pattern of behaviour" by Mr Clinton.

His approval ratings appeared to be suffering from the remorseless accumulation of charges for the first time.

A poll for the NBC television network, taken before the weekend, showed only just over half of those asked now approving of the President – a drop of more than 10 points over two weeks.

Britain overspending on Millennium, says EC

Exclusive

SERIOUS tension has arisen between the Government and Brussels over the amounts of money being spent on marking the millennium in a number of poor British regions, writes Katherine Butler.

The European Commission has warned ministers in writing that it will not sanction EU funding for one-off Millennium projects which "distort" long-term economic regeneration strategies negotiated with Brussels.

"The climate is a complete squeeze on public expenditure in the UK but it's a bit depressing that there is lots of millennium money floating around yet local regeneration seems to be the last priority," said one Commission source.

privately. Brussels is poised to unveil plans to phase out its own spending in many UK regions, but officials voiced fears that priority will be given to celebrating the millennium rather than using available national money to replace lost EU funds.

Under the EU principle of "additionality", European grant aid must be "matched" by the national government. Increasingly, officials complain, local communities are finding it difficult to secure the matching cash they need to trigger Brussels money.

The Government has secured European cash for three Millennium projects: Doncaster's "Earth Centre" costing a total of £130m, another called "Magna" in Rotherham, and Hull's "The Deep".

Regions face cut, page 10

Today's news

ROH shake-up

A SHAKE-UP of the Royal Opera House is likely to be urged on the Government, with the Royal Opera being privatised but the Royal Ballet continuing to be funded by the taxpayer. Page 3

Sunday opening

THE transformation of the traditional British Sunday was underlined yesterday by the Halifax which opened 200 offices as part of a three-month pilot scheme. Page 5

Cannabis may be made legal for medical use

CANNABIS could be cleared for medical treatment within two years for victims of multiple sclerosis, glaucoma and other chronic illnesses which may be helped by the drug, after a "very positive meeting" between the BMA and the Chief Medical Officer for health, Sir Kenneth Calman, writes Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent.

Dr Vivienne Nathanson, who met Sir Kenneth last week, told *The Independent* last night the CMO had given the go-ahead for speeding up the research to enable synthetic forms of the drug to be made available in about two years.

The CMO indicated that the government is very much in favour of what we are doing and the need for research to be developed for cannabinoids for different medical conditions."

Dr Nathanson said there were already available a number of forms of cannabis in synthetic form and research protocols could now be designed with a small number of people to move swiftly from the research stage to treatment.

Patients will not be allowed the drug in its raw form, but it could mark a breakthrough in the Government's implacable opposition to the legalisation of soft drugs.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, yesterday rejected calls for a Royal Commission on the legalisation of cannabis by MPs including the Tory MP David Prior, who admitted using the drug for some years in his 20s, in a survey by LWT's Jonathan Dimbleby programme. It found one in five of the 81 new MPs had tried illegal drugs.

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Trouble with the wives who are a changin'

In 1988 Bob Dylan embarked on a tour he still hasn't finished, writes Andrew Bumcombe.

It has been named the Never Ending Tour and has seen Dylan, apparently unconcerned about musical consistency or his reputation, dragging himself, his nasal whine and his greatest hits, around the world's venues. Dublin last night, Cardiff tonight, San Francisco next week.

Some nights, against the odds, he finds inspiration and fires new life into the old standards. Sometimes he rips them apart, rewriting the structure – even entire sections – of songs that were the soundtrack for a generation. Sometimes he just sounds tired.

"Everything was fabley – the music, the singing, even the people in the audience," recalled Greil Marcus, author of last year's book on Dylan, *Invisible Republic*, after witnessing one performance.

"Nobody brought any energy with them and they didn't leave with any either."

How his legions of fans will react to yesterday's revelations that Dylan may secretly have had two more wives and a number of children by them, is unclear.

The claims are to be made in a forthcoming biography of Dylan written by Susan Ross, who says she has dated Dylan on and off for the past decade. If the claims are true they will certainly force many of his fans to rethink their interpretations of some of Dylan's most famous songs.

"She makes love just like a

IN THE NEWS

BOB DYLAN

woman," he sang in 'Just Like a Woman' from 1966's *Blonde on Blonde*. Yes, Bob, but which woman?

Miss Ross, is said to have supported Dylan when he was rushed to hospital with heart trouble less than a year ago.

Dylan, who recently won three Grammy Awards for his 1997 album *Time Out of Mind* (his son Jakob won two for his work with the band The

ph), which Dylan himself is said to be currently reading a draft. It will be said that in the mid-80s he secretly married one of his backing singers, by whom he has had another child.

What this relationship came to an end he is said to have married again during the 80s and had one or two more children. Critics may say he started touring again simply for a break.

Dylan has a reputation for being as enigmatic and hard to track down as some of his more obscure lyrics. "There is a power in darkness and in keeping things hidden," he has said.

With this in mind most fans will perhaps not be that staggered to learn that he might have been keeping a few things secret.

Through rough and smooth, most fans have remained loyal to Dylan ever since they heard those magical early songs that spoke of optimism and change.

He might not have had a song in the Top 40 since 1978 and until last year's *Time Out of Mind* he'd only produced one album of critical acclaim in years (*Oh, Mercy*, in 1989).

Hits such as "Blowin' in the Wind" were written as long ago as 1962 and in 1987 he somewhat ominously agreed to play the part of a washed-out singer in the poorly received film *Hearts of Fire*.

But that does not matter. There will always be people for whom Bob Dylan, the troubadour from the mid-West, has no match.



Wallflowers), is alleged to have fathered at least nine children, four more than he has officially recognised. The book also claims that Dylan, 59, has been married three times.

The singer himself claims his only wife was former Playboy bunnygirl Sara Lowndes, who he married in 1965 and divorced in the 70s.

Miss Lowndes had custody of their five children and during their marriage break-up Dylan wrote one of his most famous and acclaimed albums, *Blood on the Tracks*.

In the forthcoming biogra-

phy, which Dylan himself is said to be currently reading a draft. It will be said that in the mid-80s he secretly married one of his backing singers, by whom he has had another child.

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It's All Right Pa: Bob Dylan, who is claimed to have fathered nine children – four more than he officially acknowledges. Above: His former wife Sara. Photograph: London Features

largest pop festival – has confirmed he is lining him up to play at this year's event.

DYLAN AND DOPE

Dylan may be personally responsible for corrupting the minds and bodies of our young people. Er, ... well maybe not, but he is charged with introducing the young, impressionable and clean-cut Beatles to cannabis.

The year was 1964 and Dylan was on a British tour when he got to meet the Fab Four, who up to then thought a joint was something you bought at the butcher's.

Within a few years the boys were skinning up in the lavatories at Buckingham Palace and writing drug-inspired songs such as Tomorrow Never Knows.

AT LEAST THEY COULD SING

Dylan once sang: "All I have is a red guitar, three chords and the truth." The simplicity of many of his songs has made them popular with buskers down the years and some of his best-known songs were made famous by other people: *All Along the Watchtower* by Jimi Hendrix, *Mr Tambourine Man* by The Byrds and *Blowin' in the Wind* by Peter, Paul and Mary.

Sell-off plan for the Royal Opera

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

A SHAKE-UP of the Royal Opera House is likely to be urged on the Government, with the Royal Opera being privatised but the Royal Ballet continuing to be funded by the tax-payer.

The Royal Opera House itself would be funded directly by government as a receiving house for the two companies.

The three-way split is, according to senior sources, the most likely recommendation to be made by the committee under Sir Richard Eyre looking into the future of opera in London.

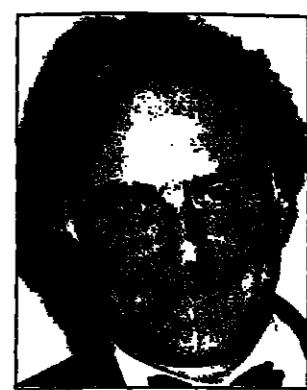
It will report to Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, next May.

The privatisation of the Royal Opera would be a culmination of years of public unease at the large amounts of subsidy it swallows up, and recent unease over management ineptitude. The Royal Ballet, currently enjoying critical acclaim and with much cheaper tickets, will continue to receive Arts Council cash.

The ROH itself could not easily be privatised, since £78m of lottery money has gone into its redevelopment, and the public would need to have a stake in its future.

The English National Opera, meanwhile, would continue as an entirely separate company, either at its present home at the London Coliseum or possibly at the Sadler's Wells building in north London.

If the Government does decide on privatising the Royal Opera and funding the ROH as a receiving house, there will be question marks over the future roles of the boards of the company and the ROH, composed of many of the great and the good of the arts world. There



Sir Richard Eyre: Report on opera due in May

will also be question marks over the roles of ROH chairman, Sir Colin Southgate, and chief executive, Mary Allen.

Ms Allen, who was criticised by the Culture Select Committee last year, would be unlikely to want to stay on as chief executive of a receiving house.

The recommendations of the Eyre report will come into force after the completion of the ROH's £214m rebuilding programme in autumn 1999.

The Government's ownership of the ROH would also give it a say in determining ticket prices, something the Labour administration would want, again because of the amount of lottery money in the new house, and because of the party's commitment to "people's opera".

During the past 12 months, the Royal Opera Company was twice forced to take emergency measures to stave off liquidation. It has changed both chairman and chief executive and been the subject of a scathing select committee report. Mr Smith is said to be especially keen on privatisation, and significantly refused to rule it out when he appeared before the select committee last autumn.

Book prices could be chopped by a fifth in new price war

By Nigel Cope

CONSUMERS could soon enjoy cheaper books as the sleepy British book market heads for a price war that could knock 10-20 per cent off the cost of a typical hardback or paperback.

According to a report published today, the book battle will be sparked by the invasion of the UK market by aggressive American companies which started last year. They are keen to open large book superstores, similar to those found in the United States. The report's authors say that with shop rents in the UK being far higher than those in the US, the new entrants may need to cut prices in order to generate the high sales they need to make their investments pay.

The US invasion began in earnest last September when Borders, a US book superstore retailer, bought Books etc. Books

ers is opening large book shops that also serve coffee and feature areas where customers can browse through magazines and surf the internet.

Barnes & Noble, another American book retailer is also keen to find sites in this country but has yet to open any that will merge it with Diltons.

WH Smith, which recently bought the John Menzies chain, has been losing out to specialist chains like Waterstone's and the supermarket chains which are selling cut-priced best-sellers.

The new American entrants are likely to try to offer consumers something different to stake a claim in a market dominated by Waterstone's and Diltons which account for one in five of Britain's book sales. Waterstone's has also been opening superstores.

A price war would be good news for consumers who have been faced with continued high prices despite the collapse in 1995 of the Net Book Agree-

ment which allowed publishers to determine book prices.

Since then only popular best-sellers and classics have had their prices cut while prices of other titles have risen sharply. A new hardback that is not on the best-seller list is now typically priced at £15.99-£17.99 while paperbacks often cost £5.99-£6.99.

However, Waterstone's claimed that price was not the major consideration for book buyers. Alan Giles, who runs the combined Waterstone's-Dillons business, says consumers find the range of books on offer, the knowledge levels of staff and the environment of the stores all more important than prices.

"I don't think the Americans will try to build market share on price," he said.

Radio 4 gets ready for fury of Middle England

MONTHS of speculation over the future of Radio 4's programming will end today when the new schedules are unveiled by the BBC, writes Steve Rognan.

The corporation has faced fury from some sections of its Middle England audience over plans to axe many well-loved programmes, but Matthew Bannister, Director of BBC Radio, promised that listeners would not be disappointed.

"It will be good to talk about what is actually going to be in the Radio 4 schedule rather than what is not," he said. "We have some great programmes on the way."

Mr Bannister and James Boyle, the Radio 4 Controller, have faced a storm of protest from listeners concerned about the axing of programmes or changes in broadcast timing of others.

Favourites to be abandoned include *Kaleidoscope*, *Afternoon Shift*, *Sport On 4*, *Breakaway*, *Week Ending*, *Does He Take Sug-*



Matthew Bannister, Director of BBC Radio, and Jenni Murray of Woman's Hour

? Mediumwave, *Call Ed Stourton*, *Medicine Now*, *Science Now* and *Going Places*. Among those whose timings will change are the *Today* programme, which will run from 6am through to 9am, knocking *Farming Today* and *Yesterday in Parliament* from their regular slots.

A final decision on the future of *Yesterday in Parliament* will be made by BBC governors when they meet on Wednesday, following concerns raised by politicians.

Two other favourites, *The Archers* and *Woman's Hour*, presented by Jenni Murray,

ray, are also facing changes. *The Archers* will gain a sixth weekly episode, on Sunday evenings, but the running time of each edition will be cut by two minutes.

Mr Boyle said the changes, which will come into operation on 1 April, are being made to stem the tide of listeners switching to other stations.

Research has shown that many people switch off as soon as the *Today* programme finishes. The BBC intends to hold on to these listeners by introducing new, livelier programmes.

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Costs warning over student fees

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

THE COST of charging university tuition fees will soar to £15m a year by the time the scheme is fully implemented, student lenders claim today.

Research conducted by the National Union of Students to coincide with the second reading of the Bill to introduce £1,000-a-year student fees, suggests the administrative cost of the new system will be almost double government estimates.

NUS president Douglas Trainer said: "Fees will cost too much money to administer and raise no new funds for the quality of education. It is time for the Government to give up on the legislation and rethink the financial arrangements for students and for British higher education."

Ministers estimate the fees scheme will cost no more than £8m out of the £150m that fees are expected to yield in October. A spokeswoman for the Department for

Education and Employment said money had already been made available to cover costs as part of this year's university budget settlement.

The NUS figures were based on an internal study carried out by Portsmouth University, which found fees would cost £200,000 a year to collect from the year 2000, when all people in higher education will be paying towards their tuition.

Academics at Portsmouth are preparing to take on extra staff to deal with processing bills for students, dealing with local authorities and providing extra support for those who find themselves in difficulty.

Student leaders, who will deliver a 100,000-signature petition protesting at the fees to Downing Street today, are hoping to capitalise on backbench anger at the plans.

The Teaching and Higher Education Bill faces a tough passage through the Commons after peers inflicted three major defeats on the Government in the Lords. Amend-

ments included a measure to reintroduce student grants, which are due to be replaced by loans.

Vice-chancellors are also launching an offensive today to persuade ministers to plough back all the fees income into higher education.

Universities back the fees, arguing they are the only way to reinvest in a university system hit hard by cuts over the past decade. In a submission to the Government's comprehensive spending review, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, argues that the fee income should form part of an investment package running to nearly £1bn a year for three years.

Chief executive Diana Warwick said: "We need adequate public funding so we can get on with the job of expansion, maintaining quality and boosting national economic competitiveness. There will be a cost of collecting the fees which makes it more imperative that money from fees comes to higher education."



Stage conference: The director Sir Peter Hall with Elaine Paige as Celimene in rehearsal for Molière's *The Misanthrope*, which opens at the Piccadilly Theatre in the West End of London later this month

Photograph: Nigel Norrington

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مكتبة المعلم

Cole Turkey

THIS HAS been a period of severe withdrawal pains for those of us who were addicted to Michael Cole (below). From his persuasive appearances on television to his swishing rebuttal letters to the *Spectator*, we've had to go "Cole turkey" since the former spokesman for Mohamed Al-Fayed retired two weeks ago. He abruptly cut off all his old telephone and fax lines when he quit the chintz-covered executive offices on Harrods fifth floor and disappeared into the PR hell of anonymity. Some said he had gone abroad, destination unknown. But Pandora has learned that the PR maestro is definitely in this country. A source with access to the Fayed inner sanctum says that Cole received a lucrative £1m farewell package and is currently entertaining an offer to teach corporate communications at Harvard University next year. It's difficult not to be envious of those lucky Ivy Leaguers. How enriching it would be to learn the art of spin-doctoring from the man who, when referring to the non-existent nurse who heard Princess Diana's last words, coined the irrefutable phrase: "He [Mr Fayed] was approached by someone with good reason not to be identified."

Short break

CLARE SHORT, Minister for Overseas Development, went "on leave" Friday. It is rare for any minister to take an official "leave" when Parliament is in session. Was she ill? Was there some other problem? No, she was merely going off to spend three days with her family, including her long-lost son. One year ago, how many ministers would have declared an official "leave" just to go away for a family weekend? As far as Pandora is concerned, this is a refreshing example of what politically correct behaviour ought to mean. "She's been planning it for some time," said her office.

Sunday hype

IT'S FAR too early to judge the new *Sunday Business*. Andrew Neil's pink paper for "the first day of the working week" launched five weeks ago. The informal consensus seems to be fine design, good writing, but a shortage of important stories. Perhaps it was to rectify this impression with the punters that page two of yesterday's *SB* carried a banner boasting of "breaking important financial news that our rivals have to follow".

Of the six so-called "scoops", Pandora took exception to three. The *SB* claims to have broken the story about David Montgomery's wish to sell Mirror Group shares in this newspaper on 1 March, but this was hardly news. See, for example, John Diamond in the 21 January *Evening Standard*: "Monty, it's pretty certain, wants to sell". Regarding the *SB*'s claimed 1 March scoop about Ian Sri Khoo's wish to sell his 15 per cent in Standard Chartered, we carried that story in the *Independent* on 23 February. Finally, the *SB*'s claimed 8 March scoop about Granada and Littlewoods forming a TV shopping joint venture was long preceded by an *Independent* story of 4 February that said, "Littlewoods is trying to assemble a consortium of retailers to run a TV channel."

White House Willey

THIS WEEK is cutting up even rougher than usual for President Bill Clinton. Last night, American television broadcast an outlandish 40-minute interview with Kathleen Willey, the widow of a former Clinton friend and associate, who was allegedly groped in the White House. Even more ominous, yesterday the *New York Post* broke the story of yet another young White House intern due to testify in front of the Washington grand jury later this week. Despite all of Hollywood's efforts to ride piggyback on the scandal, films like *Wag The Dog* and *Primary Colors* can't compete with the bizarre reality. The name of this new 24-year-old former intern is Sherie Densuk.

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BBC

There's no rest for wicked Britain

Not so long ago,
the British Sunday
was sacred. Now
even the banks
are opening.
Louise Jury
reports

WHERE New York never slept, Britain was once the sleepy Sunday capital of the world. But not any more.

Now there are Sunday supermarkets, Sunday afternoon drinking and the full 24-hour, seven-day-a-week society moved a step nearer yesterday with Sunday banking.

Few other countries have seen the traditional day of rest eroded to such an extent. In Israel, the Jewish Sabbath holds supreme and in many Arab countries, banks and other services close on Friday. In the Indian sub-continent, banks are closed on Sundays.

Yesterday, Halifax, Britain's biggest mortgage lender, opened the doors of 200 branches in a three-month pilot Sunday opening scheme, believed to be the first of its kind in Britain, for its 20 million customers.

Spokesman Mark Hemingway said: "We know that people want to shop on a Sunday – it's the second busiest day of the week in terms of customer transactions (after Saturday). We think there is a demand for our services too, but the only way to find out is to do it."

Two hundred of its 900 branches opened from 11am to 3pm to coincide with the spring house-buying rush.

The Halifax's network of estate agents already open on Sundays and the bank which converted from a building society last year, considers it logical for people to arrange their mortgage on the same day as they find their dream home. The first mortgage was arranged within hours of opening yesterday.

Mr Hemingway said: "It's soon after a trial in Milton Keynes. Britain's first 24-hour telephone banking service, First Direct, opened in 1989. A spokeswoman said Saturdays were almost as busy as Monday to Fridays and it had found business on Sundays "steady".

"Flexibility suits most people and other banks and building societies are beginning to realise it," she said.

Some banks and building societies have opened on Sundays in the run-up to Christmas and the Abbey National and Midland Bank have a handful of branches in supermarkets.

Barclays, which pioneered

Saturday opening in 1982, is to open six branches on Sundays certainly breaking with tradition. If you look back 15 or 20 years, some of the traditional banks, like Barclays and Lloyds, only opened until 3pm weekdays and not at all on Saturdays. Things have changed completely."

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ness on Sundays "steady".

John Alexander, the cam-

paign manager, said: "We are

moving towards the 24-hour so-

ciet, but our information is that

people think it's getting a little

bit out of hand."

However, the move towards

a society that is never closed

does not please everyone. The

Banking, Insurance and Fi-

nance Union (BIFU) has ex-

pressed concern at extending its

members work duties. And the

Keep Sunday Special campaign,

which lost the fight against

Sunday supermarket opening,

remains critical.

John Alexander, the cam-

paign manager, said: "We are

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Knowing how long it took to

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people needed a bank open on

a Sunday in case they bought a

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"A World Health Organisa-

tion survey showed there was

strong medical evidence that we

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ropean countries accept this

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"We think the backlash will

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Is this the real face of William Shakespeare?

By Andrew Buncombe

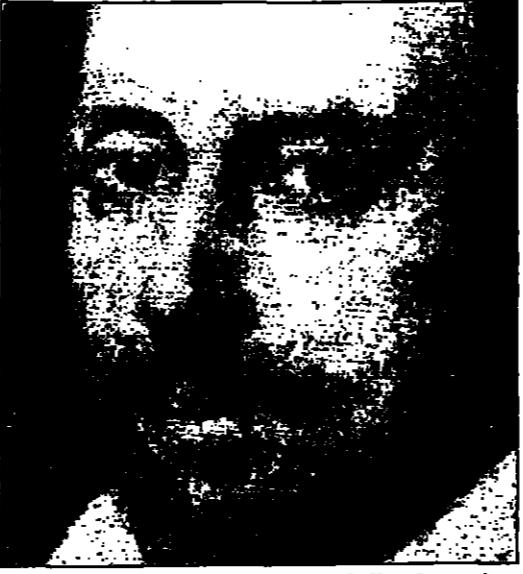
"GOD has given you one face and you make for yourselves another."

Shakespeare may have known something when he wrote the above lines which appear in one of his most famous plays, *Hamlet*.

His own face – or rather, faces – have been at the centre of a long-running academic debate which some scholars believe may now finally be over.

It was reported yesterday that German academics from Mainz University believe they have found new evidence to prove what Shakespeare really looked like. Analysis of the playwright's death mask has revealed a series of facial marks and idiosyncrasies that correspond to those found on busts and portraits.

Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, professor of English at Mainz University, has been examining the death mask since 1995. She said scientists working at the Technical University of Darmstadt had used a photographic technique to measure three-dimensional surfaces of the mask to create an ac-



Triple trouble: The classic view of Shakespeare (above left), the National Portrait Gallery's version (above right) and his death mask (right) which may be a fake

Photographs: Reuters/Fastfoto

curate model of Shakespeare's face.

They used the same technique on a marble copy of a bust of Shakespeare, kept at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire. Through this analysis they discovered three small

marks on the left eyelid which could be matched to marks on the death mask. Further tests have matched the facial dimensions of the mask with two portraits of Shakespeare, one of which hangs in the

National Portrait Gallery in London. The portraits also show a slight swelling in the left eyelid, possibly caused by a rare cancer which affects the tear duct. "We did not have a single authentic image of Shake-

speare but now, all of a sudden, we do have a true likeness of the bard," said Ms Hammerschmidt-Hummel.

However, the death mask has long been considered by many experts to be a fake. It was bought by a German who visited London in 1775.

The controversy surrounding Shakespeare's face is likely to continue for some time. Both of the portraits are of unknown provenance, and critics might argue they were based on the (fake) death mask.

Richard Proudfit, professor of English at Kings College, London, said while Shakespeare died in April 1616, the interest in his biographical details did not begin for another 50 years.

"This whole area is fraught with danger. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC used to have scores of items reputedly carved from the mulberry tree in Shakespeare's garden. Someone pointed out that for them all to be genuine there would have to have been a whole forest in his garden – not just one tree."

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Parents 'are washing hands' of 16-year-olds

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

PARENTS feel that they can wash their hands of their children once they turn 16, challenging public policy assumptions that families will support teenage school-leavers.

A survey by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation into youth homelessness found that parents often see their children's 16th birthday as marking a watershed in their responsibilities.

Half of all parents thought it was reasonable to let a 16-year-old girl leave home rather than accept a boyfriend, they objected to. And almost all agreed that a 16-year-old boy who clashed with his mother's new partner should be the one to leave home rather than the partner.

In-depth interviews with families living on local authority estates in Staffordshire, and young people who had become homeless found that there were often important differences in the background reasons for conflict.

In the past 20 years there has been a marked rise in the incidence of youth homelessness. Whereas in 1981 the typical single homeless person was still a male in his forties or older, by 1991 the Department of the Environment study found the majority of the single homeless were young people aged 25 and under.

Although parents are nearly always willing in principle to provide a home for older teenagers, many insist that it depends on acceptable behaviour and other conditions such as board and help with chores. Where conflict arose they thought it was acceptable for the children to leave home.

Young people who had grown up with the same parents

were most likely to have become homeless because of arguments over their behaviour. Nine out of ten young women said friction was caused by disputes over boyfriends; while parents described various failed attempts to control their daughters. Young men had to leave home after being caught stealing from their parents, or physical confrontation with their fathers.

But young people whose families had been disrupted by parents separating were most likely to have become homeless because they could not get on with the new partner, or the parent wanted to "make a new life" for themselves.

Of the 56 young homeless people who were interviewed, two in five said they had been physically or verbally abused, including a majority of those who came from broken homes. Just under one-third reported mental health problems and nearly one in six had attempted suicide.

These findings have an important implications for the Government's 'New Deal' where young people over 16 will be required to take places in education, training or employment," said Joan Smith, of the Housing and Community Research Unit at Staffordshire University. "There is a clear disparity between policy assumptions that families will house older children and the way in which many parents take a more qualified view of their responsibilities.

Although parents are nearly always willing in principle to provide a home for older teenagers, many insist that it depends on acceptable behaviour and other conditions such as board and help with chores. Where conflict arose they thought it was acceptable for the children to leave home.

Young people who had grown up with the same parents

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Those Budget leaks. Who should you believe?

Confused by all those Budget leaks in the weekend newspapers? Our Economics Editor, Diane Coyle, casts a cool eye over the predictions and spells out how the key Budget changes might really look.

'Brown to tax middle-class child benefit' (*Sunday Times*)

The Chancellor has long been itching to claw back some middle-class benefits to finance improved help for the low-paid, and child benefit is at the top of his list. The *Sunday Times* reports that he will use the £700m this would raise to increase the level of child benefit for the first-born by more than inflation, to sweeten the pill politically.

The catch is that many mothers have low pay or no pay and would not be liable for tax on the benefit in their own right. The Chancellor would need to get round the hurdle of independent taxation of husbands and wives in order to make a tax assessment based on family income. A return to joint taxation would mean a huge tax increase on working women and run into all kinds of obstacles such as how the Inland Revenue should treat cohabiting couples. It raises the awful spectre of tax inspectors in the bedroom. Could this *Sunday Times* story be a classic Treasury kite-flying exercise?

Mr Brown does, however, need to find around £1bn to finance what we know will be the symbolic centrepiece of his Budget, the Working Families Tax Credit and Childcare Credit. This replacement for Family Credit is meant to help low-income families by making sure work pays.

It will take the form of a tax credit in the pay packet, although there will be an option for the woman in the household to receive it directly even if she is not the main earner.

The new Childcare Credit for eligible families is intended to make up, in cash terms, for the loss of the single-parents benefit. But it will be available to couples with children as well. Pre-Budget hints suggest as

much as £1bn extra will be found for a more generous package of tax and childcare credits for those in low-paid jobs. The measures are likely to be timed to coincide with the introduction of a national minimum wage, to ensure the Government is not simply subsidising mean employers.

This week could see a timetable for the introduction of a 15p or 10p starting rate of income tax as another encouragement to work. A related Budget measure to boost job creation was signalled by Martin Taylor, head of the tax and benefits task force. Employers' national insurance contributions currently jump in big steps at various levels of income, discouraging jobs that pay sums just above these steps. Mr Taylor has recommended a big increase in the lower limit for employers' NICs, to be paid for by a small rise in their contributions for higher earners.

'Brown pledges £500m to NHS' (*The Observer*)

Even with public finances in healthy shape, thanks to higher tax revenues and tight control on government spending, Mr Brown will live up to his Iron Chancellor image by refusing to take the brakes off expenditure. But the *Observer* says that he is widely expected to find more money for priority needs, health and education.

The NHS got an extra £300m to tide it over the winter, and both areas were allocated additional funds in last July's Budget. But the amounts the Chancellor can produce are still limited by his pledge to stick to his predecessor's spending totals for two years. Although these have frayed at the edges - thanks to New Deal spending financed from July's windfall tax on the privatised utilities, and a few extras paid for from the reserves - the broad outline will



Waiting for the budget: The Haylett family in Forest Hill, south London -- Hyton and Helen and their children Abigail, George and Holly

Photograph: Andy Blackmore

available to 10 per cent from 1 April 1998. He clearly means to get rid of it altogether. He could restrict it further or abolish it, saving the Treasury more than £2bn a year.

'Luxury company cars face tax hike' (*Mail on Sunday*)

The *Mail* says Mr Brown is likely to remove the £80,000 ceiling at which directors pay 35 per cent tax on Rolls-Royces, Bentleys and Aston Martins.

The tax treatment of company cars has become steadily tougher since 1993, and users are now taxed on 35 per cent of the list price of the car, with reductions linked to business mileage and the age of the vehicle.

As an environmental measure, the mileage allowances are widely expected to be reduced or abolished.

The Budget will also confirm a pre-announced environmental measure, increases in petrol duty above inflation. In July the Chancellor raised vehicle excise duty by £5 to £150 for cars, but he could opt for a further rise.

However, this looks like being one of the few green measures on tomorrow.

What other measures will there be?

Individual Savings Accounts:

Government proposals for the replacement for tax-free Tessa and Peps, which were set out in November, will be modified as a result of the uproar they caused in the financial-services industry.

A planned £50,000 lifetime limit on the amount that can be saved in an ISA will probably be scrapped, and rules for the amount transferable from Peps and Tessa could be eased. ISAs are due to come into force in April 1999.

Crackdown on tax avoidance: Clearly signalled in July, in the November Pre-Budget Report, and in a move just over a week ago to close a specific loophole relating to offshore trusts, there will be more anti-avoidance measures. Accountants are bracing themselves for scores or even hundreds of specific clauses, and perhaps also a general anti-avoidance proposal outlawing any transaction whose purpose is simply to avoid tax.

For companies and the wealthy, this could be the big news tomorrow.

Company taxation: The Chancellor will introduce reforms to corporation tax pre-announced in November. Advance corporation tax is to be abolished, and big companies will move to a system of quarterly tax payments (rather than payment a year in arrears).

The rate of corporation tax is also to be reduced to 30 per cent, following a cut to 31 per cent in the July Budget.

In the long run the new system should encourage investment, but companies have complained that their cashflow will be hit by bringing forward their tax payments. Mr Brown might make some extra concessions to help small and medium-sized companies over this cashflow hurdle.

Pre-announced tax rises:

In his first Budget last July Mr Brown announced the ending of income tax relief for private medical insurance; a further increase in real terms rises in tobacco duties; a higher rate of stamp duty on house sales above £250,000; and the phased withdrawal of tax relief for profit-related pay schemes.

Altogether, these add up to a pre-programmed tax increase of £3.6bn in 1998/99, equivalent to about 2p on the basic rate of income.

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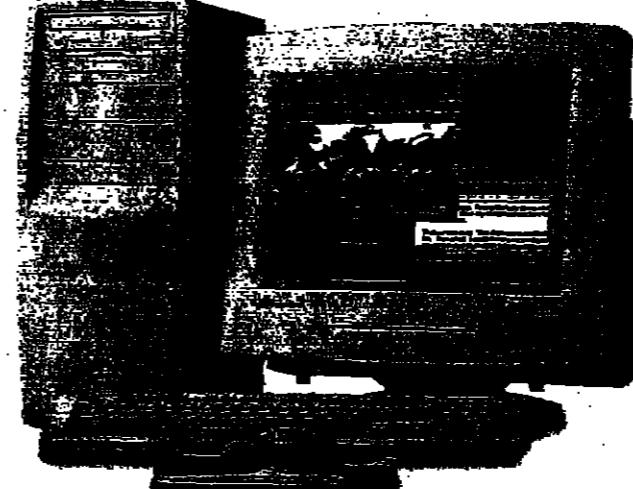
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Commission rings changes in 'Agenda 2000'

THE gloves will come off in Brussels on Wednesday when the European Commission proposes the details of its "Agenda 2000" reforms to regional and farm spending. European Union governments are counting the cost of admitting five former Soviet bloc countries and Cyprus early in the next century. The rationale for the reforms is that to expand these high-spending policies in their present form to the poor farm-dependent states of the east, would bankrupt the Union.

No government, least of all Britain, wants to increase its contributions to the budget so the Commission has to steer expansion without breaching the existing spending limit (1.7 per cent of member states' GNP). This is the context for expected cuts in aid to regions across Europe.

Aid will be cut in regions which are now rich enough to stand on their own feet and concentrated on those who are not. A four- to six-year transition for the losers is built in.

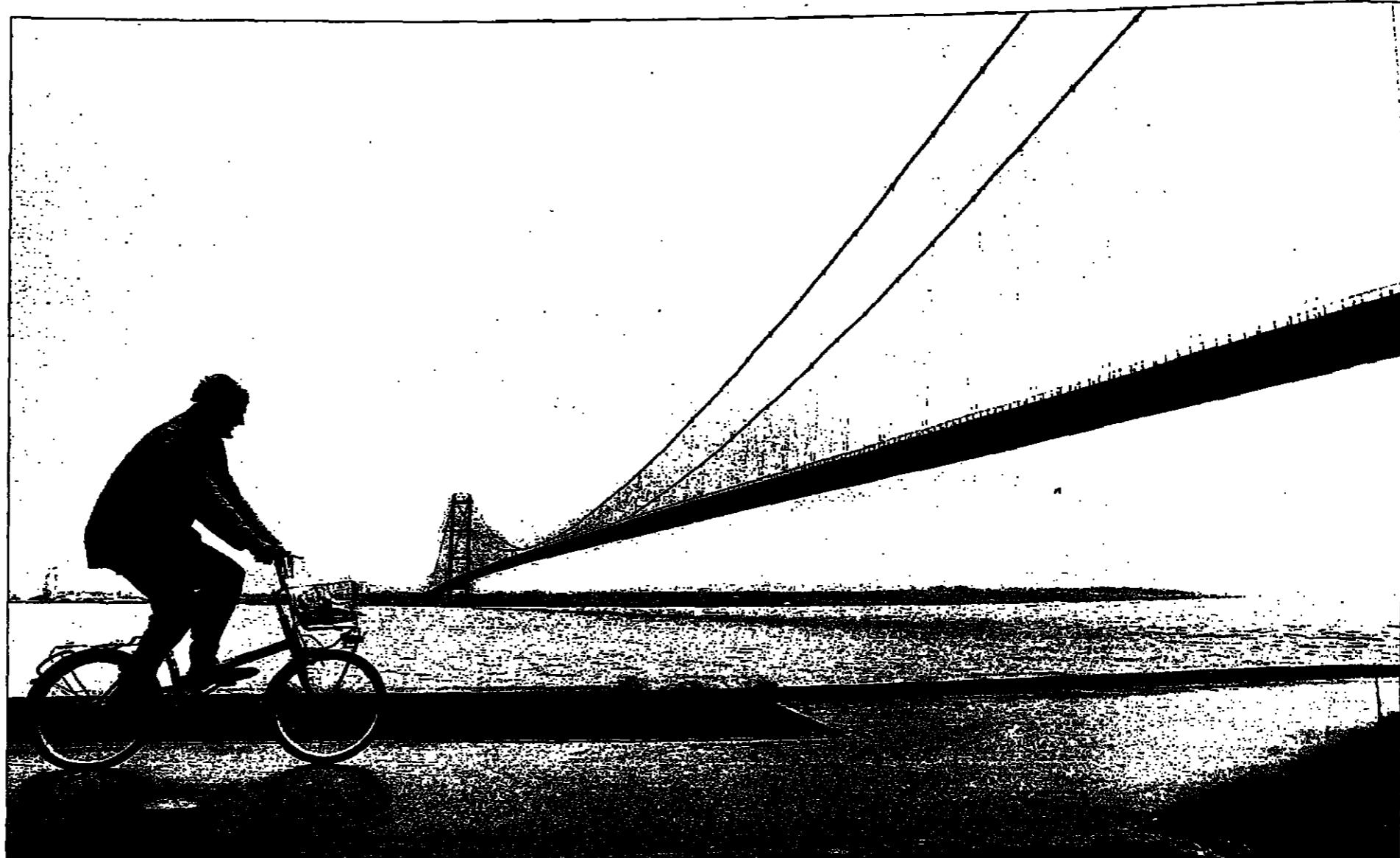
Britain's complaint is that UK regions will shoulder the

The EU's plans to take in new members mean that resources for regional aid will increasingly be channelled to the newer, poorer countries. The implications are serious and far-reaching, Katherine Butler explains

worst cuts because of the way poverty is measured. Government strategy is to warn that the cuts will wreck efforts to boost public support for Brussels. "This will harm perception of the EU at a critical time," said Arlene McCarthy, Labour spokesperson on regional policy in the European Parliament.

Deep in thought A cyclist rides on a road beneath the Humber Bridge, near Hull, where The Deep, a £50m millennium scheme, is to receive partial EU backing

Photograph: Brian Diff



Regions face £500m cut in EU aid

THE European Commission will unveil proposals this week clearing the way for cuts in European Union aid to British regions of up to £500m a year. The proposed shake-up will expose the worst strain yet between the Blair government and Brussels, with up to 70 per cent of eligible UK regions in danger of seeing their money slashed.

Behind-the-scenes lobbying has been intense, but the Government has so far failed to convince the Commission to drop plans it believes are framed to hit Britain hardest even though the UK is now the fourth poorest EU member state.

In Brussels, officials are dis-

mayed at the sums being pumped into millennium projects which are winning priority in terms of government support, over lower-profile job-creation schemes in depressed regions.

On Wednesday, Monika Wulf-Mathies, the EU regional policy commissioner, will outline details of a radical shake-up to the regional aid budget which with farm spending absorbs three-quarters of the EU's £60bn spending each year.

Reform is being driven by plans to admit early next century of millions of poor central and east Europeans whose income per head is on average less than half the EU average.

Ms Wulf-Mathies claims the Government's attitude is con-

tradictory. On the one hand, Britain wants expansion to Eastern Europe, but at the same time is not willing to dig deeper to pay for it. "The biggest outcry has been in Britain, but the arguments we are getting are not very convincing," said an aide.

Britain has been receiving £1.5bn a year since 1994, but that will run out in 1999. Under Ms Wulf-Mathies' proposals Northern Ireland and the Scottish Highlands and Islands would lose the priority claim to aid they enjoy now, while nine of 13 regions in industrial decline could see their funding halved and axed. Merseyside is expected to retain top rates of aid and South

Yorkshire where wealth per head has fallen to about 75 per cent of the EU average, may win increased share.

But overall the regions claim they will be shouldering the brunt of the cost of EU enlargement because unemployment will be used as the yardstick and the jobless rates in Britain have fallen since the EU aid cake was last divided up.

Meanwhile, east Germany and parts of Italy will see their funding increased because the new drive is to "concentrate" available cash on areas which need it most. The Commission believes aid is spread too thinly under the present system.

The Commission's directorate for regional policy has also written to the Government to express concern that the focus on millennium projects could distort the economic regeneration strategy which EU money is supporting.

"The Deep", a £50m millennium scheme in Hull, will be given partial EU backing because the Commission accepts it could promote tourism, but others have been rejected.

"Local regeneration seems to be the last priority when it comes to securing matching funds, but there is plenty of money floating around for the millennium," said one EU source.

EU aid may be stripped bare

A SEQUEL to the Full Monty might find Robert Carlyle and his Sheffield mates on a coach to Brussels to protest about the threat to jobs in a new EU financed enterprise park.

Hit by pit closures and the decline of heavy engineering, South Yorkshire has sunk into poverty worse than parts of Greece, Spain or east Germany and is lobbying to win for the first time the highest-possible EU grant aid rates. But other parts of Yorkshire and neighbouring Humberside are at serious risk of being barred from even the lower aid category.

Losing this classification would probably halve funding although cuts could be as high as £70 million a year.

"We are alarmed. Frankly I

think it's going to be disastrous," says Robin Small, director of the Yorkshire region's Brussels office. Income per head is 12 per cent below the EU average but this will count for nothing. Unemployment will be used to measure a region's prosperity and on paper, rates in Yorkshire and Humberside look a lot better than in say the coalfields of southern Belgium.

Yet thousands who lost jobs have left the workforce for good and because they have given up seeking work are not counted. And many new jobs are low paid, or what economists call "peripheral". The figures therefore tell nothing of the depression and the depth of the structural problems which persist, says Robin Small.

Deal on Cyprus clears the way for talks on EU expansion

Patching together a deal on how to embark on accession negotiations with the divided island of Cyprus, the EU has cleared the way for an on-schedule start to enlargement talks with all six "first-wave" candidate members on 31 March.

The deal by foreign ministers at a weekend of informal talks starts a middle course between extremes - Greece's stance that unless talks with the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government went ahead without contest, it would

block the entire enlargement process; and France's proposal that discussions with Cyprus should be put on ice until its Greek and Turkish communities there settled their differences.

In the meantime, the EU hopes two things will happen:

that the Cyprus delegation contains Turkish Cypriots; and that the overall settlement which has eluded UN negotiators since the Turkish invasion of the northern half of the island in 1974 can be achieved. Neither looks likely. —Rupert Cornwell, Edinburgh



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Clinton wilts in court of public opinion

Last night's television interview with Kathleen Willey was the latest and perhaps most damaging component in the steady accumulation of sex allegations against President Bill Clinton.

He is accused of making unwanted advances to a woman who had come to him in personal distress to ask for a paying job, a charge he strongly denies.

But an almost equally damaging claim is made by this week's edition of *Newsweek* magazine, which accuses him of arranging for one of his Democratic party allies, Nathan Landow, to put pressure on Ms Willey not to make her accusation public.

In reasoning that seems familiar from other alleged Clinton sex cases, Mr Landow is quoted as telling her that if she says "nothing happened", she cannot be contradicted.

So far as public opinion is concerned, it is Ms Willey's personal testimony that will probably count for the most. She appears a credible witness, more credible than the others and more of a victim.

So far as the law goes, it is probably the claim that he, or his allies or subordinates, exerted pressure on his accusers.

Mr Clinton is currently being judged in two courts at once: the court of law and the court of public opinion.

In the judicial court, he is currently involved in two cases.

Latest sex claim may induce people to make links that the law cannot do, writes Mary Dejevsky in Washington

There is Paula Jones's civil suit for sexual harassment, relating to an incident in 1991 when he was Arkansas state governor and she was a government employee.

And there is a criminal investigation, part of which claims that he had an affair with a young White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, and induced her to lie about it.

As yet, Mr Clinton's defence in both cases has held up well assisted by a domestic media operation that was so pummelled by (White House) accusations of irresponsibility and inaccuracy early on that it has played safe ever since.

Whatever happened in the Arkansas hotel room or with Ms Lewinsky in the White House, no third-party evidence seems yet to have emerged to corroborate the charges.

It is a "she said-he said" scenario that, lawyers say, would make it hard to find Mr Clinton liable.

For all the pages of testimony made public by Ms Jones's lawyers on Friday, it still seems contestable whether Ms Jones has a case for sexual harassment, either in terms of what did or did not happen to her in the hotel room or in terms of whether her career was damaged.

ly involved with Mr Clinton or not, all the women cited - from his self-confessed mistress, Gennifer Flowers, through to Monica Lewinsky - seem to have been encouraged to keep silent.

In law, the individual cases are steadfastly refusing to mesh to the benefit of Mr Clinton's accusers.

There may be evidence of pressure being exerted in Ms Willey's case, but not in Ms Lewinsky's, which is the one under investigation.

Public opinion, however, is liable to make connections that the law cannot do.

The fact that Mr Clinton's approval ratings are now starting to fall, suggests that the avalanche of evidence that has come out this weekend could precipitate an even steeper slide.



Claim and counter-claim: Kathleen Willey, whose television interview last night was the latest contribution to the accumulation of allegations against President Bill Clinton

A rollercoaster ride to the White House

KATHLEEN WILLEY was a handsome 46 and married when she approached President Clinton for a paying job in the White House in November 1993, writes Mary Dejevsky.

She was one of the White House, working three days a week as a volunteer. But family debts had run out of control, her marriage was in trouble and she needed a salary.

Until they fell on hard times, she and her husband, a town planning lawyer, had been leading members of the Democratic Party in the state of Virginia and had energetically raised funds for the Clinton campaign, travelling to Little Rock, Arkansas, for election night in 1992.

Before her marriage, Ms Willey had worked in clerical jobs and as an air hostess with TWA. Marriage had brought her a life of considerable comfort and two children. It was said also to have given

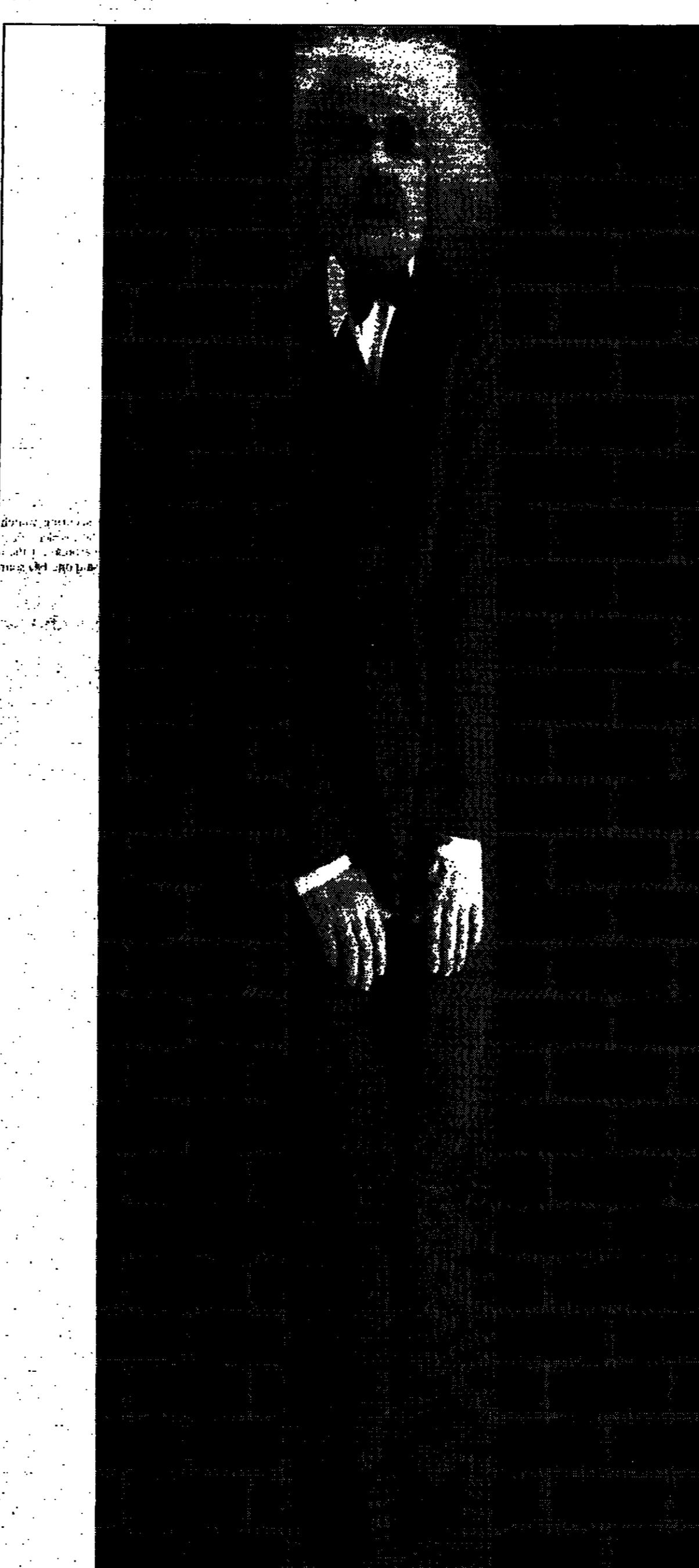
her a taste for proximity to power; she was described as having "a fascination with the President".

Whatever happened when she went to see Mr Clinton in the Oval Office, Kathleen Willey's career thereafter took a sharp turn for the better. She received a salaried job, was included in two delegations to international conferences at White House expense, and joined a list of the great and the good on the board of a military service organisation.

Her personal life, though, was not so successful. She had returned from her encounter with Mr Clinton to find that her debt-burdened husband had committed suicide.

When her White House job came to an end she continued to be plagued by money difficulties.

She was living quietly near her home town of Richmond, Virginia, until called to testify in the Paula Jones case last year.



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Slick old fox set for comeback in Armenia poll

By Phil Reeves
Yerevan, Armenia

Were it only a matter of looks, the man on stage could easily have stepped off a campaign bus in San Francisco. Glossy-jowled, with a Clinton haircut and a silver tongue, he is as tailored for the consumer as a Parker pen.

The 3,000 electors stuffed in the hall are lapping up every syllable. He moves smoothly from family man to elder statesman, from pat to president. Speech complete, he glides out into square outside, where he hands snowdrops to the women in the crowd before driving off in a Volga in search of more votes.

Karen Demirchian is as slick a stump performer as you are likely to find and yet his CV owes about as much to the democratic process as Noah (who wound up on top of nearby Mt Ararat) did to the electric drill.

For 14 years Mr Demirchian was Armenia's first secretary of the Communist Party until Mikhail Gorbachev kicked him out in 1988. His skill at pumping money out of his friends in Moscow is reflected in some of Yerevan's most grandiose buildings. Now, after 10 years in obscurity, he is back. And, at 65, he wants to run the place again.

The world's strategy-makers will be watching this pocket of the West-Caucasus as it goes to the polls today for the first round of its presidential elections. The second round, a two-man race, is expected on 30 March. Bound up with the outcome are some of the West's most pressing geopolitical interests, including Caspian oil.

Mr Demirchian's reputation is that of a party hack who surrounded himself with cronies and ruled a republic awash

with corruption. He is vague on policy, especially about Nagorno Karabakh, the cause of a war with Azerbaijan which cost 25,000 lives. But he says he wants to strengthen ties with Moscow if elected. The size of his crowds and the polls suggest he might be. Western diplomats are not keen. "Stagnation," replies one when asked what the future would hold.

Yet in the few weeks since his reappearance Mr Demirchian's ratings have shot skywards, largely through popular nostalgia. Life has not been easy for



Karen Demirchian: Giving away snowdrops

Armenia. Unemployment is 45 per cent; borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed because of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The days when people had to rip down trees for fuel are past. But so have the days when Armenia was among the Soviet Union's most prosperous republics. So, too, have plaudits from the West for pushing ahead with reform and democracy.

The 1996 election which returned Levon Ter Petrosian to power was so rigged that 40,000 people took to the streets in protest. Yet Armenia's future course remains of critical in-

terest in the West, especially the US. Anxious to limit the influence of Moscow and Tehran over the republic, Washington has been pouring in cash.

Armenia's borders are a few miles from the planned route of a pipeline through Georgia along which most Caspian oil will eventually be piped from Azerbaijan to the West. If Yerevan tilts still further to Moscow under Mr Demirchian, the oil will flow through territory sandwiched perilously between Russia and an even more pro-Russian Armenia. It is a far from stable arrangement: Georgia's president, Eduard Shevardnadze, has twice been the subject of assassination bids.

Although it would never admit it, the US would rather see a victory by Robert Kocharian, one of three front-runners in today's poll. The Prime Minister, too, charged after Mr Ter Petrosian resigned last month, the victim of outrage over his willingness to make concessions on Nagorno Karabakh. No matter that Mr Kocharian is from Nagorno Karabakh, and seems unlikely to do much to unravel that tragedy. He is generally pro-Western. He also has the support of the security forces and Defence Ministry and the Armenian diaspora.

Worries about Mr Demirchian may prove overblown. Two elderly neighbours - Gaidar Aliyev in Azerbaijan and Mr Shevardnadze - are of the same pedigree. Yet they have found favour in the West, helped by the bouquet of oil. But it will be a strange twist. The Caucasus will be dominated by three wily old ex-Communist hacks who served under Brezhnev. Who, in the euphoria of Soviet collapse, can have expected that?



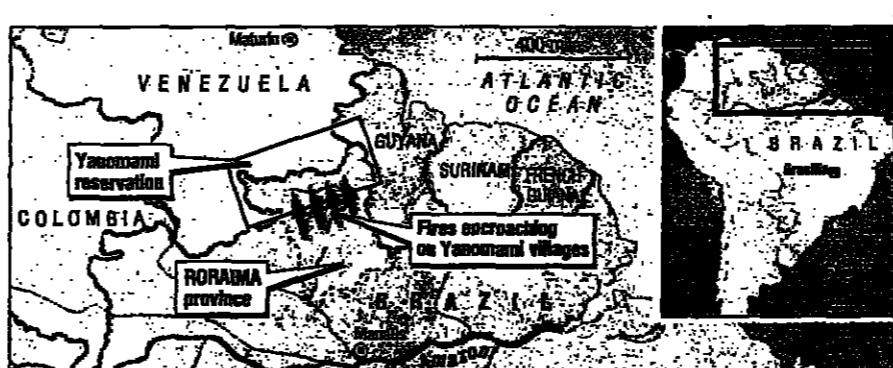
Scorched earth policy: The Brazilian government has done little to save the rainforest, which is disappearing fast in the state of Roraima. Photograph: AP

Bureaucrats fan the flames of Amazonia

By Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

OFFICIALS in the remote Brazilian Amazon jungle state of Roraima, ravaged by wildfires for the past two months, are angry over what they say is a slow response from the federal government in Brasilia.

They say the government has been holding back promised funds for firefighting helicopters and other measures to halt the blaze, which has already charred 22,000 square miles, a quarter of the state's forests. The fires, following the area's worst drought in 30 years, are threatening 15 villages inhabited by hundreds of Yanomami Indians, the world's last surviving Stone Age tribe. The blaze has already wiped out one-third of



the state's crops and burnt alive 12,000 cows.

"We want the federal government to release the funds we need to control these fires," Roraima state spokeswoman Consuelo Oliveira told the Associated Press. "So far we haven't seen a penny."

Many Brazilians were al-

eady critical of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso over an environment bill passed by Congress last month. The bill imposed strict penalties for several ecological crimes, but after lobbying by wealthy logging companies, Mr Cardoso diluted the bill by vetoing nine articles. One would have han-

ded down three-year prison terms on farmers or loggers who cut or burnt forest areas without permission.

The government is due to announce a new "Green Package" this week, offering farmers incentives to discourage them from the traditional "slash and burn" technique of

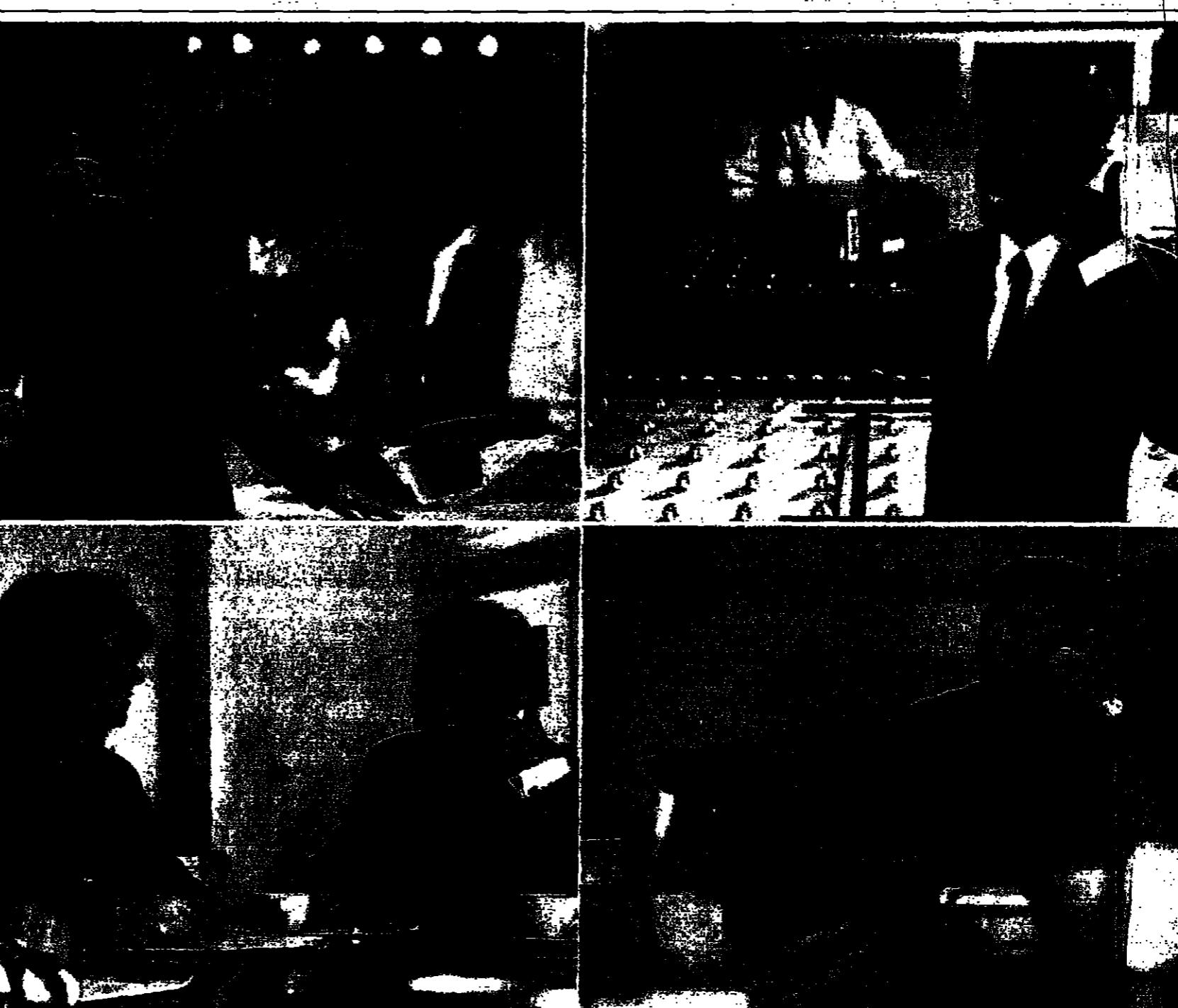
burning down trees to create farmland.

After delaying statistics for many months, Mr Cardoso's government finally admitted in January that deforestation of Amazonia had reached record levels over the past two years, doubling between 1994 and 1995 alone. One-eighth of Brazil's rainforests has been destroyed, by farmers or loggers chopping down trees for timber or burning them to create cattle pastures or farmland, over the past 20 years.

Roraima state governor Neudo Campos has visited the federal capital, Brasilia, three times over the past two months in an effort to get federal aid, particularly a promised \$2.4m (£1.5m) for 22 specially converted firefighting helicopters from the US and Russia.

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Photograph: Reuters

China escapes censure from UN

Amazonia
FOR THE first time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, China will not face a motion condemning the country's record at this year's UN Human Rights Commission. Washington announced at the weekend that, following in the footsteps of the European Union, it would not sponsor an anti-China resolution, citing recent improvements in human rights on the mainland.

"We made this decision because of the steps China has taken and the expectation of further progress," said a White House spokesman. It was Peking which last Thursday gave Washington the get-out clause it was seeking, by an-

nouncing that China intended to sign the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. "We welcome that step as representing China's formal commitment to those principles," the US spokesman added.

The reality was that the Geneva motion, which has never been passed, was dead in the water last year after France and Germany broke ranks with the EU consensus on China. After that split, there was no chance that the EU would back a joint motion at this week's annual gathering, and last month it duly backed off. This left

Washington in the hot seat, having to decide whether to sponsor such a resolution in the run-up to President Bill Clinton's state visit to China, now planned for late June.

Human rights groups yesterday lambasted Washington's decision. "The United States is exaggerating the few positive developments in China during 1997 and using them as an excuse to avoid censure of China at the UN Commission on Human Rights," the US branch of Amnesty International said in a statement. "China must be held accountable for its record of

gross [human rights] violations." However, it was not clear that another failed motion would have achieved any concrete results for human rights in China.

Last November, China released its most prominent political prisoner, Wei Jingsheng, and exiled him to America. The US is privately hopeful that further releases could follow Mr Clinton's visit. But there has been no meaningful improvement in political freedoms on the mainland, and the Chinese government will be overjoyed that the annual Geneva ritual, which it hated, is now

enshrined in the process, a procedure which would provide an other forum for public censure of the country's rights record.

However, ratifying the covenant could take years, and China will also be able to lodge "reservations" against certain sections.

For the time being, anyone who wants to challenge one-party rule in China must operate invisibly. In the first mainland interview by the newly-formed underground China Democratic Justice Party, a 29-year-old member told Associated Press that the party wanted to be able to compete in elections and "let the people decide who rules".

Comment, page 15

Plural left scents victory in French regional polls

FRANCE'S Socialist-led government received an important boost yesterday as a left-wing surge in regional elections looked set to sweep many incumbent conservatives from their local strongholds. First computer projections showed the "plural left" of Socialists, Communists and Greens, which won the early general election nine months ago, consolidating its lead over the mainstream right-wing and the anti-foreigner National Front coming in a strong third.

The final tally of which camp controls which of the 22 regional councils in mainland France and Corsica will not be known until next Friday. The CSA polling group said that Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's "plural left" was due to win 42.2 per cent of the vote nation-wide while the Sopra group put its score between 36.5 and 38 per cent.

— Reuters, Paris

Indian president picks PM

ATAL Behari Vajpayee, of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, was asked to take power in India yesterday, ending two weeks of suspense since inconclusive elections. President KR Narayanan appointed Mr Vajpayee, 71, as prime minister even though his alliance still fell short of a majority. He will be sworn in on Thursday. — Reuters, New Delhi

Joseph Rowntree Foundation not linked with grants to John Prescott

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is the UK's largest independent supporter of research on social policy questions with an international reputation for political independence and impartiality.

A front page story in The Sunday Times last Sunday was wholly incorrect in stating that the Foundation had a 'political arm', the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, with the implication that the Foundation had caused grants to be made to Mr Prescott and other senior ministers.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a completely separate body from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust. There are no personal, constitutional or financial links. There are no staff or Trustees in common. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a charity which may not engage in party political activities.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, having received no apology or correction from The Sunday Times, are to issue proceedings against The Sunday Times for damages and an injunction.



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Let's go to work, says Mr Zhu, and China's cadres tremble

IT WAS just four years ago that Zim Rongji admitted privately that China's rising inflation rate was keeping him awake at night and that warning about the country's economy had knocked several points off his sleep. As China's economic policy shone and reigned in the economy, however, he gets the ultimate reward — appointment as China's first new prime minister in 10 years. Given the country's dire economic problems, however, 69-year-old Mr Zhu seems to be in for a bout of extended insomnia.

The promotion of Mr Zhu is the key event at this year's National People's Congress. He is seen as the only man capable of tackling one of the hardest political jobs in the world. Even the odd Chinese official seems enthusiastic; one had recently read his speech and were "so excited they could not sleep that night".

Mr Zhu's reputation is of a man who tolerates neither fools nor procrastination. "Some executives do not feel guilty in the least when their businesses are suffering great losses," he blasted last week. "How can such enterprises change for the better with such people in charge?" For the first time, with Mr Zhu in charge, there is the possibility of someone getting to grips with China's real problems, rather than simply mouthing the rhetoric of reform.

His appointment also represents the ultimate political rehabilitation. In 1957, Mr Zhu was condemned as a "Rightist" and sent to the countryside for

allegedly praising Hungary and Yugoslavia's brands of reformist communist economics. He was only brought back to favour in 1979, rising to Vice Prime Minister in 1991, and Politburo standing committee member in 1992. His image has been burnished by a series of anecdotes about "Boss Zhu", as he is known. As mayor of Shanghai in the late Eighties, he was also nicknamed "One Chop Zhu" as he cut through layers of red tape bureaucracy. One of his first actions in that job was to send the city's tourism cadres out to clean the city's public toilets.

Regional bosses dread a visit from "Boss Zhu" as he regularly rebukes officials in public. He also takes a tough line on corruption, said to have noticed that one local official was wearing an expensive watch which could not have been bought on his salary — and sacked the man on the spot.

In his new job, Mr Zhu intends to sack incompetent state enterprise managers, shed 4 million civil servants, and overhaul a state sector which has 37 million surplus workers. If this was not tough enough, the massive restructuring will start implementation just as economic growth is slowing, foreign investment is set to dive, and exports are suffering competition from competing neighbouring countries whose currencies have hugely devalued.

It would be a tall order for anyone, and adds up to a lot of sleepless nights. If it works, Mr Zhu will go down in the history books as the intellectual heir to the late Deng Xiaoping. If he

fails and the restructuring prompts angry social upheavals, he will be the scapegoat. He is the brainiest Chinese leader, but already has enemies for his abrasive working style, and does not have a bedrock of political support.

"If President Jiang Zemin had a free hand, I suspect that Zhu would not have been his choice as prime minister. In many ways, Zhu has forced himself upon everyone, fails and the restructuring prompts angry social upheavals, he will be the scapegoat. He is the brainiest Chinese leader, but already has enemies for his abrasive working style, and does not have a bedrock of political support. "If President Jiang Zemin had a free hand, I suspect that Zhu would not have been his choice as prime minister. In many ways, Zhu has forced himself upon everyone,

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Trust Labour's old cultural ideals

THE AMBIVALENT British attitude towards culture is summed up in the new name for the ministry which does those bits of government that do not fit in more familiar departments. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport started life as that of National Heritage, as if the only culture which mattered was inherited from the dead.

Such is our suspicion, though, of Ministries of Culture, a foreign concept like Ministries of Justice or the Interior, that Chris Smith had to tack on two other words to soften the impact.

In popular perception there are only two kinds of culture, high and low, and the Government's involvement in either of them is deeply suspect. First, there is high culture, which is oil paintings and opera, where the role of government is to tax honest, hard-working folk of modest means in order to subsidise the pleasures of toffs. Then there is low culture, which is sport and pop music, where the role of government is to have its senior members pose for the cameras in the company of the currently fashionable stars in the hope that this will attract votes – a ploy which has a tendency to backfire.

Tony Blair should have known New Labour's New Luvvies would turn on him as soon as they had emptied the Downing Street cellars, just as John Prescott should have expected his street cred to be doused with a bucket of cold water. Rock musicians are not supposed to approve of politicians; just as you would not ask a politician to compose rebellious music.

Yesterday's hint that Gordon Brown will act to ensure free entry to the great national museums and art galleries is a much more substantial gesture, not because it is "high" rather than "low" culture, but because it suggests an appreciation of culture which is deep rather than shallow.

The *Independent* and *The Sunday Independent* have campaigned for free entry because we see the country's great cultural institutions as part of our communal life, our public space, offering everyone the chance to discover things they might not choose to pay for.

We are pleased to see that this ideal still has some hold on our national leaders. It seems that, in their drive to modernise socialism, they have not in fact forgotten its early values. Many of its 19th-century thinkers, from the early Marx to William Morris, spoke about art as the form of work by which people could be enabled and uplifted.

This should be the response both to left-wing philistinism, which sees culture as an elite activity, and to liberal scepticism, which associates a ministry of culture with state propaganda. We have to reclaim inclusiveness, seeing culture as the description of a fuller life for everyone, and reclaim a liberating role for the state.

Philosophically, the answer to the philistines is in Mr Blair's own constitution for his party, the new Clause IV, which declares that "by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone": a public library is testimony to a stronger society than a private one, just as a free school, museum or art gallery is. It creates "for each of us the means to realise our true potential" which creates "for all of us a community".

But this should be the start, not the end, of debate. We welcome Gerry Robinson's decision to sack all the members of the Arts Council. There can be no going back to the period when fossilised art galleries and musty museums found themselves overtaken by television, when beating for handouts stifled creative energies. There is more than a hint of this in the whingeing of Oasis's manager that such great talent could never have flowered if the band had not been allowed to do whatever it liked on the dole for as many years as it pleased.

But let us have an open argument about the boundaries. If the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum should be free, why should we pay £17.50 for the Millennium Experience?

Mr Blair's emphasis on unleashing the creative talent of the British people is absolutely right. These cultural skills increasingly drive the nation's economy. Labour politicians ought to be seen more with artists, popular scientists, writers, computer software designers, architects and commercial directors – instead of consorting with the shallow cult of football. On the eve of a "Budget for women and children" the Chancellor sent a strange signal by endorsing the New Lad culture, watching Tottenham Hotspur from the directors' box at White Hart Lane.

Let the Government promote an inclusive notion of culture, high and low, and use that to convince us that it is not simply concerned with surface perceptions but a deeper, fuller life for all.

At last, a minister who answers the question

SOMETIMES it takes a quiet Sunday to reveal the slow trends in public life which are lost in the weekday hurly-burly. One such feature is the continuing rise of Jack Straw. There are not many ministers of this people's government who are prepared to be accountable to the people through the form of open-ended interviews on radio or television. Since the election, broadcasters have repeatedly intoned that no minister was available to defend what ministers had collectively decided (the rise in prescription charges was the most important recent occasion). But yesterday the Home Secretary went on the BBC's *The World This Weekend* to say why he didn't think judges should set sentences for murderers, why he had released Roisin McAliskey and why he didn't think legalising cannabis was a good idea. In each case he took detailed issue with the forceful arguments of his many critics, answering questions rather than using them as prompts for passages of pre-prepared press releases. Whether or not listeners agreed with him, the contrast with the halting word-processed prose of too many of his colleagues was deafening.

14/COMMENT

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Hopscotch: children at play in the village of Hoi An, Vietnam

Photograph: Rob Scranton

Plutonium perils

TODAY (16 March) is the final day for submissions to the UK Environment Agency in response to the application by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant in west Cumbria.

A fierce debate is going on between the proponents and detractors of this process, which mixes plutonium oxide extracted in nuclear reprocessing plants with uranium oxide and binds them in ceramic pellet form for burning in thermal reactors.

BNFL has run an imaginative PR campaign about turning burnt matches into fuel for future generations. But the target audience didn't understand it.

The industry sees MOX as a means of returning plutonium to the contracting utilities in a safe and uncontroversial form and a lifeboat to cling to until international opinion swings back in their favour and they are called upon to build the next generation of nuclear power plants, and ultimately the fast breeder.

BNFL was permitted to build the Sellafield MOX plant before the last government had arrived at any policy on the merits, or otherwise, of mixed oxide fuel fabrication, increased transportation of radioactive materials, potential proliferation concerns (by blurring the distinction between civil and military end use) and spent MOX fuel management.

This Government must not repeat the mistakes of its predecessors. It must "call-in" BNFL's application to commission the Sellafield MOX Plant. It must consider, in an open and transparent manner, the case for a public inquiry where all the issues can be thoroughly investigated in the context of the sustainable society this government is committed to delivering.

PATRICIA BIRNIE, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, USA; SARAH BURTON, Greenpeace; MARTIN FORWOOD, Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment; PAD GREEN, Friends of the Earth; MARTIN KALINOWSKI, International Network of Engineers and Scientists against Proliferation, Germany; DAVE KNIGHT,

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; XANTHE HALL, International Physicians for the Prevention of War, Germany; MARTIN HEMINGWAY, Nuclear-Free Local Authorities; ARJUN MAKHANI, Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, Washington DC; MICHAEL MARIOTTE, Nuclear Information and Resources Service, Washington DC; KRISTEN OSTLING, Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout; Canada; PAUL LEVENTHAL, Nuclear Control Institute, Washington DC; THOMAS SMITH, Environmental Society, Imperial College London; GRACE THORP, National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans, US; Dr LIZ WATERSON, Nuclear Strategy Group Medact; JOHN WATSON, Socialist Environment and Resources Association, Penrith, Cumbria

Diana and charities

THE DEATH of Diana, Princess of Wales, has undoubtedly raised awareness of the importance of donating to charity, but the overall impact on the level of public donations has not been as dramatic as supposed ("Diana's death aids charities", 11 March).

Research by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and NOP indicates that around three million people gave to charity in response to the Princess's death, and that about a third of these individuals were encouraged to give solely because of the tragedy. Interestingly, these last appear to come from social classes C, D and E, and as such are atypical of those who give to charity on a regular basis.

It could, therefore, be argued that the Princess's death has encouraged a whole new group of people to give to charity. But even if this is the case, the long-term impact on the

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Plutonium perils

level of charitable donations is unlikely to be significant. The public has donated around £1.3m to the Diana fund to date. While this is a substantial figure, it represents only slightly more than the public donates to the voluntary sector each day of the year. In reality, donations to charity fell by 20 per cent between 1993 and 1996, from £5.3bn to £4.58bn.

It is therefore encouraging that the trustees are committed to consulting with charities and voluntary organisations to ensure that, in the longer term, as wide a range of causes as possible are able to benefit from the new fund. The charity sector has had a difficult time of it in recent years, and any new funds that can be generated will be very welcome.

STUART ETHERINGTON
Chief Executive
The National Council for Voluntary Organisations
London N1

Prescott 'smears'

I WOULD like to respond to your paper's prominent coverage of criticism of *The Sunday Times* by John Prescott. You quote Mr Prescott as saying we were trying to smear him and "rubbing in the gutter" ("Prescott rages at Sunday Times", *Independent on Sunday*, 15 March).

The facts tell a different story. We put a journalist, Simon Trump, into Mr Prescott's Hull constituency in 1996 because of rumours of political infighting and to find out at grassroots what was going on. We used subterfuge (the reporter did not reveal he was a journalist) precisely because we wanted to get at the truth.

Mr Trump was a passive observer at meetings over a period of months and did not act as an agent provocateur. In the event little of interest emerged and no story was written by Mr Trump when the investigation ended over a year ago. If it had been

attempt to smear Mr Prescott, a less scrupulous paper would have tried harder to find something positive.

I am happy to defend subterfuge as a crucial journalistic tool. Many stories, including "cash for questions", would not have been written without it. They were published because they were in the public interest and the subterfuge was revealed to readers.

As for the two recent stories by *The Sunday Times* about Mr Prescott, one was about a row in Hull which had already appeared in a local paper. Why should we not cover a vicious public argument involving the Deputy Prime Minister's son? The other was the non-declaration by Mr Prescott of a large donation. That is now being investigated by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Two legitimate reports hardly amount to a "vendetta". Mr Prescott was happy in opposition to use our stories about Tory sleaze and foreign funding of the Conservative Party for political advantage. Now in government he seems unwilling to accept the inevitable scrutiny that comes with being such a powerful politician.

JOHN WITHEROW
Editor
The Sunday Times
London E1

Too long a life?

EVERY day we are urged in the press and television to forgo small pleasures – smoking, drinking, eating beef – in the hope that we may live a little longer. Every day I go to visit my husband in a nursing home, where the residents are dying slowly of old age "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything". Is it really worth it?

SHEILA D HAYDEN
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

Understanding art

JASON REESE (letter, 11 March) misses the point of David Rodway's justified complaint, in relation to *The Angel of the North*, about the amateurism of art criticism (letter, 9 March)

That the public or officialdom takes an interest in art doesn't mean it understands it – look at the derision once heaped on Impressionism and Modernism, and praise for mawkish and moribund Salon works. Nor is the unfashionable claim that art needs special knowledge about perception and creativity necessarily anti-democratic and a denial of art's capacity to embrace the interests of the ordinary person. Real democracy consists not in a philistine free-for-all, but in providing the education and culture to equip all with the skills in perception, reasoning and philosophy for assessing the assertions of experts – skills vital in art as in the rest of life.

The supposition that artistic meaning and quality speak directly or transparently, without mediation, is common yet naive. If engineers don't entrust evaluation of the reliability or functional properties of their structures to the uninformed, why should art be any different?

RICKY HANDS
London SE27

Merchant of modernity

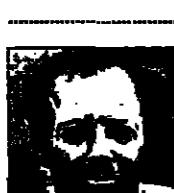
NO PLAY could be less politically incorrect than *The Merchant of Venice* ("Teachers defend Shakespeare's anti-Semitic play", 14 March). With amazing prescience of modern tedium worries Shakespeare tackles not only anti-Semitism but also sexism (Portia and her maid beat the men hands down) and colour prejudice (of the rejected suitors the noble Ethiopian is the one Portia fancies).

If indeed you think (as I do) that the love Antonio bears for Bassanio has a homosexual element; the play tackles "gay issues" too, in that justice in the end degrades that Antonio should not bleed for his love.

Very suitable for today's classrooms.

TONY RIDGE
York

All the thrills, glamour and heroism of an agent's life (an estate agent, that is)



MILES
KINGTON

I FEEL sorry for estate agents. For one thing, nobody has ever bothered to feature them in a major novel. But today all that is changed. Yes, today I bring you a major new work of fiction about an estate agent! Not only that, but it is an interactive novel. This means that you, the reader, have the power to change the course of the story by choosing the right option at various moments. Understand? Well, you will, as soon as you get into this complete novel about estate agents, entitled...

TOP OF THE MARKET
YOUR NAME is Hugo, and you are looking for a house in the country, preferably with 5,000 acres of gardens and grouse-shooting and preferably within ten minutes of central London. How do you set about looking for it?
a) You drop a note to Buckingham Palace saying you have heard that as so many Royals are on the move, there is now accommodation within the Palace coming on the market.

b) You buy Harrods and install a roof garden.
c) You go to a top estate agent's and consult an expert.
Of course! You go to a top estate agent's and the man who deals with you, Mr Batchelor, says he thinks he has just the thing. He takes you in his car and after an hour's drive you come to Lucknow Hall, a Georgian building set among some dark trees facing north...

"IT ISN'T exactly what I had in mind," said Hugo, looking at the ravens on the lawn and the small procession of death watch beetle heading up the main drive. "It's a little... secluded."

"Secluded, yes," said Mr Batchelor. "Lonely, no. Private, yes. Remote, no. You will be amazed at the feeling of privacy combined with accessibility."

Hugo felt there was no answer to this.

He did not realise yet that everything Mr Batchelor said was designed to be answer-proof, which is the sign of a really great estate agent.

"It is really only ten minutes to Hyde Park Corner," said Hugo.

"What kind of helicopter will you be using?" said Mr Batchelor, but before Hugo could answer, Mr Batchelor's mobile phone rang and he put it to his ear with an apology.

Who can possibly be ringing Mr Batchelor?

a) It is Mr Batchelor's wife, saying she has

found out about Mr Batchelor's mistress and his hidden love nest in Wimbledon.

b) It is Mr Batchelor's mistress in Wimbledon, saying the central heating is playing up again, and it's freezing cold in their love nest.

c) It is head office, reminding him he is due

to see a Mr Chris Evans at midday.

Yes, thank goodness, it is only head office!

"SORRY about that," said Mr Batchelor, snapping his phone back into his pocket.

"Head office getting their knickers in a twist, as usual. Now, let's have a look inside..."

Mr Batchelor brought a huge key-ring still

out of his pocket, tried every one, but still

couldn't shift the lock of the front door. Hugo stepped forward and turned the handle. It opened easily.

"It's not locked," he said.

"That's strange," said Mr Batchelor, frowning.

"Why on earth...?"

"Ssh..." said Hugo. "I think I hear voices."

Silently the two men tiptoed through the supposedly empty house until they came to a room from which came the sound of live conversation. Mr Batchelor threw open the door and the two of them stood there open-mouthed.

What had they seen?

a) A TV set left behind by the previous owner, showing an old Edward G Robinson movie.

b) A team from a rival estate agent's, showing a rival customer round.

c) Salman Rushdie, sitting at a table with several police officers, playing cards.

Yes, Hugo and Mr Batchelor had stumbled across Salman Rushdie's secret hide-out, where

he was still cowering from the gun of an Iranian assassin, not realising that nobody in Iran cares any longer about him. No sooner was the door open than the policemen all leapt to their feet, scattering their cards (including, in one case, sadly, a hand containing four aces) and aiming their guns at Hugo.

"FREEZE!" shouted one.

"Who are you?" shouted another.

"I've come here with Mr Batchelor from the estate agent's..." began Hugo. He turned to point to Mr Batchelor. There was nobody there. Mr Batchelor had done a runner.

"You see, I'm looking for somewhere within easy reach of central London..."

Seconds later his arm was forced up his back and there was a gun at his head.

"We're nowhere near central London," said a voice smelling of garlic in his ear. "Talk

Big Government is coming back, thanks to the little kids



DAVID WALKER

Will mums learn to love Labour if it gives them a Kindergarten on every corner?

IS TOMORROW'S much-trailed "Budget for children and families" necessarily going to be a budget for Big Government? Perish the thought, Gordon Brown will say. Look at the aggregates for public spending. His Tory totals mean that the ratio of spending-to-national product currently seems to be in free fall - these hardly look like signs of Nordic extravagance. No one is profiting a state-supported crèche in every street.

Not yet, perhaps, but community Kindergartens are on their way. Behind the tax adjustments affecting women and children some ambitious rethinking about children has been taking place. It's only a matter of plans, proposals, seminar papers and projections at this stage. They may never come to fruition. But behind them something important has already happened. It's a rapprochement between Labour and the idea of government.

It's not the kind of thing you hear Alastair Campbell giving briefings about; it may not even be something ministers are aware of. But - on policy for children, at least - New Labour is coming out ... As what Old Labour always was, the party of the state, the muscular, interventionist, big-spending state.

Climactically speaking, during the past twelve months we have moved a long way. Even in its pallid, Majorite form, last March Thatcherism was still identifying government as the problem, the inhibitor, the agent of national decline. New Labour was at first pragmatic and sceptical about government size and capacity. Now, as Brown starts to define this administration's purposes, the state becomes the little train that can.

For me a moment of epiphany came the other day at the concluding public session of the Cross Departmental Review on Provision for Young Children. On the face of it, this is just another review exercise, one of the scores supposedly coming to fruition this spring; it was distinctive in that it was being led by officials from the Treasury who went around assuring everyone it was not just another cuts exercise.

But the review not yet over, one conclusion is obvious. Ministers are convinced that "early intervention" in children's lives secures major benefits later, for them and for society at large. Whether marshalled by criminologists, doctors or social workers, the empirical evidence consistently says: nursery schools, intensive programmes for young mothers (starting before birth), kids' clubs - they work. What that means in turn is that government will have to go to work ... nobody else, no mystical civil society, no free market is going to provide. Ministers who have spent most of their careers in Opposition apologising for government action suddenly find themselves on firm ground in advocating more of it.

Whatever Gordon Brown delivers tomorrow in terms of tax credits for child care,

the Budget is only the first shot in a new battery of child-centred policies. For example, if the Treasury is to subsidise women to buy care, education, health and social security are going to take a very keen interest in what kind of care, provided by whom, in whose premises and when. Down that road, sooner or later, you get to the state itself providing care. Practically that means a programme of state-provided "education-rich" care for pre-school children.

But no, ministers will say, we have learned the lessons of our collectivist past. We believe in splitting customers and contractors, purchasers and providers: the state may well some social end without getting into the business of employing care workers, or teachers. There will be talk about "empowerment". Ministers will praise the voluntary sector and imply that a hundred flowers will bloom as volunteers are drafted or bribed into providing crèches and clubs. But in the final analysis, the state will be there, as funder, and in many cases, direct provider. In Britain, of course, it is considered rather bad form to talk about "the state" in this way. Locally it looks like councils, quangos, the National Health Service - diverse and disaggregated. But collective, compulsory provision it remains.

Is this socialism - is Labour reverting to historical type and substituting tax-financed public sector activity for the free choices of individuals and families? It's striking, isn't it, how tired that Tory rhetoric now sounds. Also how irrelevant. In its emerging policies for children - Gordon Brown would be well advised to leave the touchy-feely stuff about "family" to his next door neighbour - Labour is the party of practical collectivism.

One of the real reasons why Big Government was so unloved in its earlier incarnations was that it is, in cause and in effect, redistributive. It uses richer people's money to spend on staff and projects which benefit the poorer. In run-down estates the voluntary sector can't do child care with education. As women move into employment they will need somewhere to leave their kids. If child-minding alone won't do those kids any good, government will have to supply the whereabouts, the premises, the trained workers the will to get the clubs up and running. Redistribution, here we come.

Is there a political will for it? Probably not. Yet Labour might manage if it bundled income and jobs redistribution with what looks on the surface like gender redistribution. Will women at large give them cover?

Women want child care; preferably they do not want to pay for it directly; most would prefer the care of very young children to involve some effort to stimulate their minds, bodies and imaginations. One of the great current questions of politics has to be whether mothers are prepared to put their political choices where they say their interests lie.

For there is a little historical doubt that Big Government and the emancipation of women from domestic servitude have done hand in hand. For all his goat-like tendencies a father of feminism was David Lloyd George (who recruited women in large numbers to make munitions in the First World War); another was Harold Wilson, who expanded the public services and with them a huge raft of women-friendly jobs.

Old Labour can hardly have been said to have benefited politically from the association. Even if now, as the polls suggest, New Labour wins the younger female plaudits, it is hard to see gender-based lines offering reliable electoral support. Older generations of Marxist and socialist women sometimes entertained warm thoughts about the state, but younger movers and shakers of the Natasha Walter and Kate Figgis stamp seem distinctly ambiguous. Can Labour persuade them Big Government is worth it, for the children's sake?

This week in Geneva, Mr Cook and Mr Blair participated in the EU decision not to permit any resolutions criticising Peking's human rights record. They claim that with the Chinese "quiet diplomacy rather than confrontation" gets results. Their examples are the release of Mr Wei and the upcoming visit of the UN's Mary Robinson to Peking.

In dealing with China, mistrust is the better part of diplomacy

Jonathan Mirsky,
formerly of 'The
Times', says the
softly, softly
approach does
not impress the
Peking regime

CHINA'S next premier, Zhu Rongji, the Politburo member who threatens to behead bankers who ignore his edicts, will visit Britain next month. As Teresa Poole reports today, the details of his life are sketchy. Yet his country has the Earth's largest population, one of its biggest economies, a sizeable army and global ambitions. Such a country requires constant, minute analysis.

But only bare statistics are available. Secrecy extends to the correct date for the founding of the Communist Party, how many millions died because of Mao's economic fantasies during history's worst-ever famine between 1959 and 1961, or how many demonstrators were killed during Tiananmen. Foreigners who seek information on these matters are regarded in Peking as "unfriendly" or "anti-China".

The questions must be asked. Zhu Rongji's flacks have persuaded many Westerners that he is an economic genius. Perhaps. What are the facts of Mr Zhu's life - was he in detention for 20 years during the Maoist era; can a man bred in a command society champion a market economy?

At the very least, British people need to understand how their officials deal with Chinese affairs. It is not an encouraging story. Last week, when China's most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng, met Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary showed Mr Wei a list of 10 political prisoners. He hoped European Union countries could ask Peking about their circumstances. Did Mr Wei know anything about them? Well, yes. He had been released in mid-November, but his name was still on the list.

How seriously can the British Government take human rights in China, if it can't keep lists of political prisoners up to date? And accurate. In 1991 there were over 200 names on the list. It is not that prisoners have been released, like the fortunate Mr Wei. International pressure on Peking, never great, has lessened.

This week in Geneva, Mr Cook and Mr Blair participated in the EU decision not to permit any resolutions criticising Peking's human rights record. They claim that with the Chinese "quiet diplomacy rather than confrontation" gets results. Their examples are the release of Mr Wei and the upcoming visit of the UN's Mary Robinson to Peking.



The US rolled out the red carpet for Jiang Zemin. Without Mr Wei's release he would not have been so welcome

But what will she discover? Her visit is likely to resemble the recent trip to China by the Catholic priest, the evangelical minister and the rabbi sent by President Clinton. They saw only "official" religious leaders and establishments. Or perhaps it will follow the itinerary of those EU diplomats who visited prisons in which the inmate chosen for exhibition had a bed, a loo, and gold fish bowl in his cell. Typical?

As for Mr Wei, he maintains it was the international clamour of many years that got him out, the annual possibility of a Nobel Prize, and Washington telling the Chinese that unless Mr Wei was released, President Jiang Zemin would not get the full White House welcome he eventually received last October. Mr Wei asked Robin Cook to give him an example of how discreet bargaining has worked; according to Mr Wei, the Foreign Secretary admitted he didn't have one handy.

Western leaders say they bring up human rights at every meeting with the Chinese, but not invariably. Once in Hong Kong I asked an American Under-Secretary of Commerce, just arrived from Peking, whether he had raised human rights with his Chinese opposite numbers. "No, human rights weren't on my list." When I noted that even Schindler had had a little list he rose to his feet with his fists clenched.

In September 1991 John Major went to Peking to sign a memorandum of understanding about the new Hong Kong airport, the first Western leader to visit China since Tiananmen. He was carrying a list of political prisoners furnished by Amnesty. On the plane he talked to me about the list and a possible visit to London by the Dalai Lama, asking what I thought would happen when he raised human rights with Premier Li Peng. At press conferences Mr Major made much of his confrontation with Mr Li and told us that human rights were at the centre of his China policy. Although a British embassy official asked me where the major Peking prison for dissidents was - he had, after all, only been in Peking for two years - I did believe an effort was being made.

Even when Sir Percy Cradock, the Prime Minister's major foreign policy advisor, assured reporters in the British ambassador's garden that the human rights discussions were "just frost ... The airport is the key agreement," I put this down to Sir Percy's famous pragmatism.

It was only after Mr Major's party arrived in Hong Kong that I learnt, from a colonial policy secretary, present at all the negotiations, that human rights had been only diffidently raised with the Chinese. They were given to understand that this

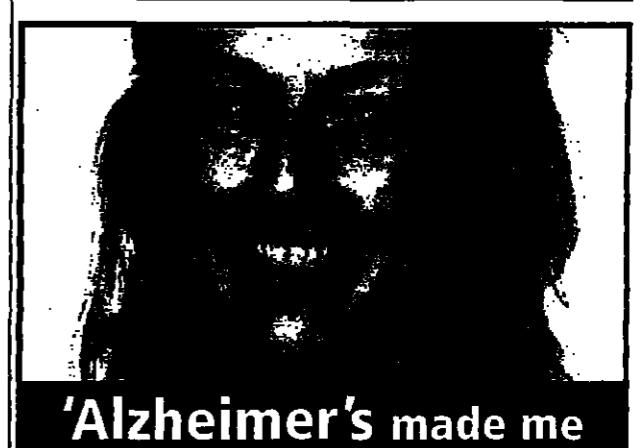
was an issue at home but not a central matter in the negotiations.

This is how it works. The principals discuss. At some point the senior western negotiator informs the Chinese side that a relatively junior official will hand to his Chinese opposite number a list of human rights concerns. Little or no further discussion of human rights occurs. At the end of the meeting the foreign position paper is handed over, and the Western leader goes out to tell the press that he forcefully raised human rights with the Chinese. We laugh at them.

Mr Wei insists that real pressure works with the Chinese. It got him out and it caused the Chinese to back away from Taiwan in 1996 when the Americans sent two naval battle groups near the island.

This is where the way China is reported can make a difference. At least the public knows what's happening, and officials know that we know. Ernest Hemingway once advised young reporters conducting interviews to "keep asking yourself 'Why is this sonofabitch lying to me?'". On China his further dictum also holds: keep your anti-bullshit detector running.

The author recently resigned as China Writer for 'The Times'



'Alzheimer's made me tired, confused and lonely'

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This makes things easier. And the support group they put me in touch with is so important to me. It's like having a trouble shared.'

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670,000 people in Britain have some form of dementia. Many more carers are affected by it. Please give £20 today by filling in the form below. You could give four carers the information and support they need through our helpline. And let them know they are not alone.

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Here's my gift of: £20 £40 £80 Or £ _____

Name Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ds _____

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I enclose a cheque made payable to Alzheimer's Disease Society

OR debit my: □ Visa □ MasterCard □ CAF Charity Card

Card no. _____ Exp. date _____ Signature _____

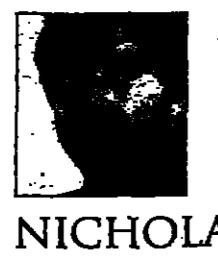
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Alzheimer's Disease Society

Clunky, chunky and their drivers have a problem, too



Why "off-road"
vehicles should get
off my road and off
my planet

IT'S a fair bet Gordon Brown will tomorrow put up the price of petrol again and, like all Chancellors since they found environmentalist religion, he will justify it by saying we must all do our bit to reduce fuel consumption in order to save the earth from man-made global warming.

I've got a better idea - with the added bonus of screwing William Hague and his wife and all those other Range Rover drivers, who are probably Tories anyway. Increase the road fund tax on all those "off-road" vehicles which are on road, on our roads, that is - those chunky, chunky, I'm-bigger-than-you types which give a rolling two-fingered salute to the environment, let alone the rest of us road users.

What kind of statement are the people who buy them making about themselves and the way they see the world? Note, first, their infantile desire to be a little higher ... tall man in the saddle indeed. (Except, with Range Rovers, it is often women saying mine's bigger than yours and for some reason they always seem to be wearing green headscarves.) To get ahead, it seems, get an ORV.

Next comes the desire to be different - but in a highly conformist way. Their drivers all want to encase themselves in



Road to ruin: Cars like the Jeep Cherokee are serious polluters

the same kind of chunky box, different in the same way from the smaller, more streamlined and less polluting cars the rest of us drive.

The Range Rover is a typical spewer forth. It started the off-road car trend back in the 1970s. According to manufacturers' figures, the latest best selling version of this two-tonne monster consumes two and a quarter times more petrol than the 1.6 litre "entry level" Ford Mondeo, the archetypal family car. It produces two and quarter times as much green-

house gas. Both vehicles carry no more than five adults.

Granted, that as the market

for these planet-trashers has blossomed, smaller, cheaper off-roaders have been produced. The three top-selling models in Britain, the Land Rover Discovery, the Vauxhall Frontier and the Toyota RAV4, all cost around half the price of the Range Rover and have considerably smaller engines. None the less, the inherent brutality and inelegance of their design compels them to swallow a great deal more

petrol or diesel than the average car - and therefore pump out at least a third more greenhouse gas in going from A to B.

Points A and B turn out to be within the suburbs or inner cities. How strange that these vehicles, made for going up hill and down dale in the great outdoors, are most often seen going backwards and forwards to school, office or Asda.

They are marketed as cars

for people who love getting close to wild nature, yet in purchasing them their proud

owners demonstrate that they

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The Dent family: It is a rare thing for all of them to be in the same room at the same time

Photograph: Steve Forrest

Juggling: it's not the way to relax

Mine clearance
So much to do, so little time. Ann Treneman finds that life is hard for working families

HANNAH MARIE DENT knew that something had to change when, during her afternoon shift at the Golden Wonder factory in Scunthorpe, she forgot to put the salt in the crisps. Her mind was elsewhere – worrying about whether her three children were home from school. "I got into trouble for that and I thought, this just isn't on," she says. Her solution was to switch to the night shift and, despite all the exhaustion and scheduling complications, she is convinced it was the right thing.

"I really do like this much better. I can get my housework done. I've got more time for the kids. I can read with them and do their spelling and homework. And we can go to open evenings and school plays," she says.

It also means that she and her husband, Shaun, run what is almost a round-the-clock shift system. They figure that, all in all, they have about a half an hour together during the day. "It doesn't do much for your sex life," says Shaun. Hannah Marie says she's not too bothered about that.

Tomorrow night, the BBC's *Having It All* season ends with a programme called, *Juggling* (the Dents are one of three couples who star in it). At first I thought there was some mistake with the title. Even the

word is a blast from the past. It belongs to the Eighties era of power shoulders and Dallas reruns. Those were the days when women's magazines carried articles about how to do more in less time.

The magazine was "for women who juggle their lives". Then its editor, Linda Kelsey, left her job after finding the juggling too stressful, and the magazine's motto changed. People started to talk about simplifying their lives and the women's glossies started to fill up with articles on yoga.

But in the real world, our lives in the Nineties have become more, not less, complicated. Employment trends show that we are working longer hours and have much less job security. Time is the most valuable commodity for many families.

Stress expert Cary Cooper says: "It is the relationship between the husband and wife that troubles me. Is it a coincidence that we have the longest working hours and the highest divorce rate in Europe?"

Two out of three families now have two incomes. Most women with young children work, both out of choice and necessity. For instance, Hannah Marie supported Shaun through years of study to become a health and safety expert and still provides the family's main income while the business finds its feet. The Dents may seem extreme in some ways, but their circumstances are not unusual.

W. Stokes Jones, editor of *Planning for Social Change*, said: "Juggling didn't go away. It just became the norm. It is now par for the course. That's the way with

trends. You can tell when they really take hold – they become invisible." And lucrative. He notes that the three fastest growing retail markets are takeaway food, domestic help and childcare. All are a tool of the juggler.

Shaun Dent, at 37, tries to cheat time in many ways. He keeps his car clock set 15 minutes ahead. He asks me if I'd like a tea or, even better, a quick tea (evidently this is the powdered kind). When I ask him about juggling, he just looks exasperated.

Clare Paterson, who created the *Having It All* series, says that the whole thing started because she was so interested in juggling.

"It's the messy bits in our lives that are the most interesting. It's the school run and the pick-up. It's not the meal but the food preparation that is interesting," she says.

She and her husband have three children. "Even at the weekends there is a constant negotiation over who is going to do what," she says. "My husband will say,

"What are the plans for the day?" The only real plan is to somehow get through it! And I just really wonder how other families cope with that."

The film features three families of five. Anna and David are both lawyers and live in a lovely big house in Kent. Jody is a final-year student barrister and is married to Tom, a prison officer. And then there are the Dents in Scunthorpe. "I was interested in looking at the similarities and differences," says director Peter Gordon.

"But the similarities far outweigh any differences and they always are around the key issue. They are always asking: Are we doing the right thing by the children? There is a lot of guilt."

No does money change things that

Hannah gets up about 1pm and does the housework and some accounts for Shaun, before picking the children up from school and cooking their tea. When Shaun gets home, at about 7pm, he makes dinner for the two of them. She reads with the kids and, at 9pm, starts to get ready for work. Hannah figures she has almost no free time. "But I do always watch *Coronation Street*," she says.

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much. Anna and David, for instance, can afford any amount of help, but often their only real chance to talk mid-week is during a shared car journey. When you compare Anna and David and Hannah and Shaun – even though there are probably hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of difference in their earnings – what they are actually saying and feeling is very similar," says Peter Gordon.

He adds that it seems to be generally agreed that it is the woman who makes the main concessions and that work, for everyone, was an area of calm compared to the chaos at home.

Novelist Maeve Binchy ushered in the superwoman backlash a few years ago with her bestselling novel *Having It All*, in which her heroine trades in a high-powered job to spend more time with her children and less time writing lists. In some ways the book mirrored her life but, with three children and a full-time writing career she still knows a lot about juggling. "Oh, God yes. I'm just writing a list now as a matter of fact. If I didn't juggle, I wouldn't survive," she says when I ring. "But in one generation we've become much more child-centred as well as more career-oriented, so it's no wonder we all make so many lists."

Shaun and Hannah Marie say that our interview is the longest time they've spent together for ages. I ask about the future.

Shaun says when his business becomes more successful then he might be able to come home earlier. Hannah says she'll never give up work: "It's my independence and I've always said my kids wouldn't go without." *Juggling* is on BBC2 at 9pm tomorrow

up

From prunes to DiCaprio ...every Monday, a quirky look at the week ahead

Pruney toons...

If you've had your head in the clouds of late you might not realise that this week is National Prune Week. With the slogan "Prunes and Prejudice" - the sexy new snack of the Nineties", experts at the California Prune Board are on a mission to rid the squiggy fruit of its association with frightful school dinners. They claim research has revealed it's the trendy, sexy personalities who guyls them down by the bucket and only prudish, traditional types who turn their noses up at them. Just to prove it, they hired model Lili Maltese to sprawl across a chaise longue with the word prune tattooed on her breast. Miss Maltese, one imagines, does not need to worry much about prunes; she's due to marry Henry Dent Brocklehurst and share in his £50m fortune and his Gloucestershire pile, Sudley Castle.

... Or go bananas

If prunes are not your bag, maybe you should opt for bananas. This week Sainsbury's gets one up on its rival, Tesco, by becoming the first supermarket to launch an organic version. They sell 48 million of Britain's favourite fruit each month but believe this environmentally friendly initiative will see figures rocket. "They are slightly smaller and thinner than their non-organic equivalent," a spokeswoman admitted, "but they do have a delicious, sweet flavour."

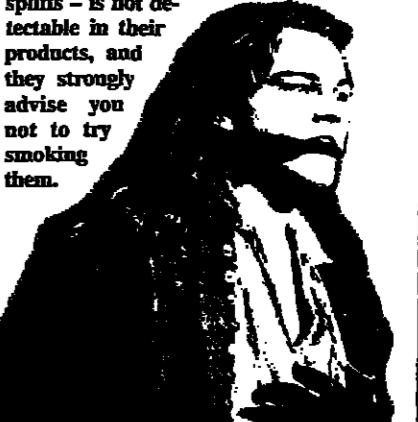


The iron man

Top banana for millions of teenage girls is Leonardo di Caprio, for whom they endure three hours of the movie *Titanic* up to six times. They should cancel all plans for the weekend. From Friday night his latest effort, *The Man in the Iron Mask* opens at the flicks. The 22-year-old boy wonder faces his biggest challenge yet as he plays the dual roles of the King of France and a low-life prisoner in this convincing drama. But don't worry if your anticipation of the plot is more accurate than with most Hollywood offerings – it is the sixth remake of James Whale's original 1939 classic.

No smoking

The Body Shop's range of hemp goodies is at last arriving in the shops. Their experts claim marijuana's sister plant can work wonders as a moisturiser; and from Monday you can snap up supplies of hemp soap, hemp lip conditioner, hemp hand protector and, best of all, hemp elbow grease. But the chain is keen to stress that THC – the mind-altering compound found in cannabis – is not detectable in their products, and they strongly advise you not to try smoking them.



We knew it was serious when the assistant bought us a drink



DINAH HALL

"CAN I help you?" means different things in different shops. In some it can be roughly translated as "I think you'll find these clothes are far too expensive for you, and your presence here is an unwelcome blot on a minimalist landscape", while in others it simply means that the staff have been on an American-style training course and will have their arms and legs pulled off if they can not approximate some semblance of helpful intent.

On the first floor of Liberty, however, it is a question that can be taken at face value as

you struggle with the concept of a pair of Yohji Yamamoto trousers with a giant plaited penis hanging over the waistband. And, yes, I felt I did need some help with the Martin Margiela jacket. Really, all I wanted to know was whether you put your arms in the sleeves or in the hole behind them, but what I got was a kind of philosophical treatise.

This jacket was all about the "deconstructed silhouette" and was part of a collection which celebrated flimsiness. "See" said the assistant, holding up a transparent top on a hanger. "it

is just like a carrier bag." This was absolutely true, but what she and Martin had not anticipated was that once I was inside it, it would look like a carrier bag containing the weekend shop.

I would love to have bought something from this walking thesis, particularly as she gave no hint of having spotted the ingrained Cadbury's Boost down the front of my Marks & Spencer's top. But this shopping expedition was in celebration of the fact that the children are now old enough for my clothes not to have to

double as face cloths (the Boost was mine). And I was just too go from wearing an expression of my children's tea to wearing an expression of a designer's tortured ego.

So to Donna Karan, armed with my sister, who has a great eye and as a lifelong Hennes shopper would, I reasoned, act as a buffer between me and the sales assistant's commission. Would she hell. "I think you have to have the top," she opined. A sleeveless top for £125, that was, I discovered when I got home, "100 per cent polyester". What I really need-

ed was the jacket and trousers but because my sister is older and knows better, I took the lot – plus the scarf which the assistant said I had to have, and who am I – Marks & Spencer to disagree?

I can't tell you how much it came to, in case my husband's reading this, but we realised it was serious when the assistant escorted us down to the bar for a drink on the house. "I don't think any cappuccino will ever taste as good as that free Donna Karan one," sighed my sister dreamily the next day over her Nescafé.

I had to remind her that mine didn't taste quite so good as it had cost, um, several hundred pounds. Anyway, I gave her the carrier bag and wrappings to take back home with her – in Norwich, she says, people would pay just to sniff DKNY tissue paper.

The new outfit does not fit in with my son's plans to downsize me. He has hidden my earings and will only allow me to watch his school football matches if I will wear a shell suit and promise not to pick him up in the Espace. But I feel I have a job to do there

on the sidelines – a sort of one-woman UN peace mission.

"Calm down, boys" I chided the fathers last week as they roared instructions to the players and questioned the gender of the referee. "It's only a game?" they bellowed incredulously. "This is football," said one, passionately clenching his fist against his heart. "It's in the blood." It was a moment of pure epiphany: shopping for expensive clothes is just like football – it's in the blood. I think my husband will relate to that.

Judge Dread

THE BRITISH love novelty records. Put saucy lyrics to a groovy beat, add a dash of seaside postcard humour and you're on to a winner. Judge Dread, the *risqué* cod-reggae artist who died on Friday night at the end of a concert in Canterbury, had a string of Top 20 hits in the Seventies with singles like "Big Six", "Big Seven", "Big Eight" and "Big Ten" which left little to the imagination and were all banned by the BBC. Somewhere between coarse rugby songs, Benny Hill and ska, these proved firm favourites with skinheads, "rude boys" and spotty teenagers chuckling at their first taste of swearing on albums like *Dreadmania*, *Working Class 'Ero* and *Bedtime Stories*.

Born in Kent at the end of the Second World War, Alex Hughes grew into a 17-stone hulk of a man. Taking full advantage of his size, he wrestled under the name of the Masked Executioner and occasionally served as a minder for the Rolling Stones during their Sixties heyday. He also worked as a bouncer and a DJ in London clubs like the Ram Jam where he heard and played ska and bluebeat, the new rhythms coming out of Jamaica (which later mutated into reggae and dub).

Along with Chris Blackwell's Island Records, the Trojan label was then the biggest purveyor of those musical genres and Hughes soon earned a job with them. Many ska records by the likes of Laurel Aitken, Desmond Dekker, Derrick Morgan and Prince Buster sold through specialist shops which didn't keep up their payments and Hughes proved a natural as a debt collector.

However, he had other plans. Having noticed the huge underground popularity of "Big Five", an obscene version of Brooke Benton's "Rainy Night in Georgia", Hughes hoped for a quick follow-up single to spin. When this failed to materialise, he used the title of another Prince Buster song and became Judge Dread. In Jamaican patois, "dread" is an abbreviation of "natty dread" - i.e. the Rastafarian with dreadlocks -

and can also mean anything serious. (A variant of the same name - Judge Dredd - was used independently for the 2000 AD cartoon character on which the 1995 Sylvester Stallone movie was based.)

A big, burly, blond, balding Englishman taking up this alias was ironic to say the least, but Judge Dread proceeded then to cut a demo entitled "Little Boy Blue" in a small studio (it cost him £8). In 1972, he presented this track to Trojan's in-house production team of Webster Shroyder, Desmond Bryant and Joe Sinclair. As the last recalled in a subsequent interview, "When Dread brought in his demo, we didn't exactly think it was a national hit but we reckoned we could pick up something around the region of 70,000 sales with the help of a change of title."

"You see, the Judge called it 'Little Boy Blue', whereas I thought 'Big Six' would create interest by making the association with Prince Buster's 'Big Five' more obvious. It sold 300,000 copies and spent 27 weeks in the British charts. In 1973, it even made No 1 in Africa."

Many thought Judge Dread was the genuine article and the scratchy, rooty sound of follow-up singles like "Big Seven" and "Big Eight" stands up well with comparison of Jamaican recordings of the period. Indeed, these tracks were often adaptations of popular sides of the times (using Jamaican musicians - like the guitarist Ernest Ranglin - who had settled in Britain), peppered by Dread and Fred Lemon with lyrics bawdy enough to give Mary Whitehouse or the BBC governors a heart attack.

In 1974, the singer left Trojan's offshoot Big Shot label and signed to Cactus Records. The following year, he cut a hilarious version of Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg's "Je t'aime (moi non plus)" which was even more daring than the heavy-breathing original (the Judge mistakenly fondling a transvestite) and became another Top 10 entry. "Big Ten" and "Christmas in Dreadland" followed, the



Dread: ribald, robust humour that was the antithesis of political correctness

latter backed by a revival of "Come Outside" much spicier than Mike Sarne and Wendy Richard's (*of EastEnders*) fame) 1962 original.

Dread carried on with covers, adapting Chuck Berry's banned "My Ding-a-ling" and Sylvia's "Y Viva Espana" tastefully retitled "Y Viva Suspenders". "The Winkle Man" and "The Fifth Anniversary EP" - containing, along with "Big Everything", the truly filthy "Jamaica Jerk (Off)" supposedly written by Elton John but in fact a reworking of one of his tracks - proved minor hits for Judge Dread, whose shocking antics and saucy lyrics had

then been eclipsed or in some cases emulated by Punk. His "Up With the Cock/Big Punk" wasn't really needed when the Sex Pistols - sans Johnny Roten - could record "No One Is Innocent" with the train-robber Ronnie Biggs, have Sid Vicious butcher "My Way" or praise the joys of "Friggin' the Riggins".

Judge Dread milked his cockney following with "Hokey Cokey/Jingle Bells" on EMI for Christmas 1978 but soon settled into semi-retirement. He wrote a column for his local paper, did an opportunist cover of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's "Relax", oversaw a budget compilation of his catalogue (*Big Fourteen* and *Ska'd For Life* were the latest), played the odd ska revival gig with British bands like the Selecter or Bad Manners.

His stage act, mixing vaudeville, music hall, single entendres and damn-right cheek was undoubtedly a major influence on Ian Dury (check out "Razzle in My Pocket"), the B side of "Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll" and Buster Bloodvessel, who used to end Bad Manners' shows by baring his huge buttocks, a very Judge Dread move indeed.

In America, skacore bands such as the Mighty Mighty Bos-

tones, Smashmouth and No Doubt have taken up the shuffling bluebeat rhythms already revived in the late Seventies by the Specials and Madness and merged them with grunge. Little do they realise that until Friday they had a very naughty British uncle called Judge Dread who was way ahead of Bernad Manning and Roy "Chubby" Brown. Judge Dread's ribald, robust humour was the very antithesis of political correctness.

Pierre Perrone

Alex Hughes (Judge Dread), singer/songwriter; born c1945; died Canterbury, Kent 13 March 1998

Peter Sillett

PETER SILLETT was one of those rare individuals, a Chelsea footballer with a League Championship medal. The Blues have won the domestic game's highest honour only once, in 1954/55, and the tall, burly defender was a stalwart member of that mould-breaking side.

Indeed, it was Sillett who struck the blow which determined the destination of the trophy, if not mathematically then certainly in the hearts and minds of the Stamford Bridge faithful. With only a handful of matches remaining, Chelsea were at home to their chief rivals, Wolverhampton Wanderers, needing victory to establish what seemed to be decisive ascendancy in the title race.

Some 15 minutes from the end, with the scoresheet still blank, the hosts were awarded a penalty and, in front of more than 75,000 spellbound fans, Sillett, the right-back, strode forward to take it. Outwardly calm but, as he revealed later, seething with apprehension, he hammered the ball low past the England goalkeeper Bert Williams before being submerged by ecstatic team-mates, Chelsea, for so long the subject of music-hall derision, were Champions elect.

A month later, Sillett was involved in another high-profile

penalty incident which ended less happily. Having been called up for his international debut against France in Paris, he conceded the spot-kick which resulted in the only goal of the game. Apart from that one aberration, however, he played well enough in a side containing the likes of Stanley Matthews, Billy Wright and Duncan Edwards to retain his place for the remaining two matches of England's spring tour, against Spain and Portugal.

Thereafter, he slipped from the international reckoning, his movement a little too ponderous for that exalted level, though other aspects of his game were outstanding. Sillett was a cultured distributor of the ball, his positional play was astute and he was utterly imperturbable under fire, but it was as one of the most explosively powerful dead-ball kickers of his era that he earned most renown. Indeed, he was a menace anywhere within 40 yards of the opponents' goal and was the author of some of the most spectacular strikes ever seen at Stamford Bridge.

Sillett hailed from a footballing family. His father, Charlie, had captained their home-town club, Southampton, before being killed in the

Second World War, and his ebullient younger brother, John, was to join him at Chelsea, then win fame for guiding Coventry City to FA Cup victory in 1987. Sillett's own career began with the Saints in 1950. Then, after performing creditably in a poor team which was relegated from the old Second Division in 1952/53, the richly promising 20-year-old was transferred to Chelsea for £12,000.

Duly he cemented a berth in the manager, Ted Drake's enterprising side - colleagues included the star centre-forward Roy Bentley and the future England manager Ron Greenwood - and played his sterling part in the subsequent Championship glory. Sadly the Blues did not build on their success of 1955, becoming increasingly unpredictable as the decade wore on and Sillett, an easy-going fellow adept at wicked deadpan humour, matured into elder statesman and skipper of the youthful combination known as "Drake's Ducklings". Had it not been for the prodigious goal-scoring exploits of Jimmy Greaves, they might have been relegated in 1959/60 but they managed to retain their status until 1961/62, when the new manager, Tommy Docherty, was unable to prevent demotion.

By this point Sillett's top-flight career had been effectively finished by a broken leg suffered in August 1961 and although he had recovered by season's end he was unable to oust the gifted rookie Ken Shelti. There being no place for him in the Docherty set-up, and feeling that his leg was not strong enough to warrant accepting offers from other Football League clubs, he left Chelsea to embark on a lengthy non-League career, at first operating as a player-coach and later solely as a manager.

Among his employers were

Guildford City, Ashford Town, Folkestone Town, Hastings United and Hastings Town and he became a well-loved fixture on the semi-professional scene.

Between 1987 and 1990 he scouted for his brother at Coventry, but it is a Stamford Bridge bulwark of the 1950s that Peter Sillett will be best remembered.

Ivan Ponting

Richard Peter Sillett, footballer; born Southampton 1 February 1933; played for Southampton 1950-53, Chelsea 1953-62; capped three times for England 1955; married (three sons, one daughter); died Ashford, Kent 12 March 1998.



Sillett: a cultured distributor of the ball

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette office, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E1 4LL, telephone 071-202 2012 (24-hour answering machine 071-393 2011) or faxed to 071-293 2010, and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (anniversaries, engagements, marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, the Queen's Life Guards at Horse Guards Parade, London SW1, and the Royal Guards mount the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, daily provided by the Grenadier Guards.

Birthdays

Mr Ben Anis, actor, 61; Mr Matthew Bannister, Controller, BBC Radio 1, and managing director, Network Radio BBC, 41; Miss Sybille Bedford, author, 57; Miss Teres Berganza, mezzo-soprano, 63; Mr Bernardo Bertolucci, film director, 57; The Right Rev Hugo de Waal, Bishop of Thetford, 63; Sir John Drinkwater QC, a Commissioner of Income Tax, 73; Sir Philip Foreman, former chairman, Stork Bros, 75; The Right Rev Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester, 48; Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Forde-Norris, Chairman Emeritus, Cheshire Foundation, 81; Mr David Heath MP, 44; Mr Ramon Hinny, former Governor-General of Canada, 64; Sir Ewart Jones, Wayne-Flete Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, Oxford University, 87; Sir Anthony Kenny, Warden, Rhodes House, Oxford, 67; Mr Jerry Lewis, comedian, 72; Mr McEwan, actor, 78; Miss Kate Nelligan, actress, 47; Mr Roger Norrington, conductor, 64; Mr Richard Purtill, former chairman, Taylor Woodrow, 82.

Anniversaries

Births: James Madison, fourth US President, 1751; Matthew Flinders, circumnavigator of Tasmania, 1774; George Simon Ohm, physicist, 1787. Deceased: Robert Smith Surtees, novelist, 1864; Aubrey Vincent Beardley, artist and illustrator, 1898. The Rev John Marcus Harston Morris, founder of *Eagle* magazine, 1899. On this day: the Long Parliament of England, which sat for 20 years, was dissolved, 1660; the first meeting of the Port of London Authority was held, 1909; Soviet cosmonauts completed an orbit of 35 million miles, 1978. Today is the Feast Day of St Abraham Kidumah, St Eusebia of Hamage, St Finian Lobhar, (The Lepre), St Gregory Makar, St Heribert of Cologne and St Julian of Antioch.

length of a defendant's prison sentence, the default sentence came into effect on the date on which the defendant was released on licence and not the date on which the sentence was due to be completed had there been no parole. This problem would be avoided by judges stating a specific date by which payment was to be made when making a confiscation order under s6(1) of the 1986 Act.

Timothy Sewell (Saunders & Co) for the applicant; Kennedy Talbot (Customs & Excise solicitor) for the interested party.

Planning

Snowdonia National Park Authority v Georgeson QBD (Div. Ct) [1998] 1 Gage J 9 March 1998.

Where a person had appealed

to the Secretary of State against an enforcement notice under s175(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, he could not, at the hearing of an information laid against him for failure to comply with that notice, claim that

Frank Tindall

IT WAS said of Frank Tindall that he tended the beautiful county of East Lothian as if it were a garden - albeit he was a somewhat ferocious head gardener who was in no doubt as to what was good for the plants in his charge. For 35 years he was East Lothian's planning dynamo, from 1950 to 1975 for East Lothian County and from 1975 to 1985 for Lothian Region. The late Professor John Mackintosh MP placed him as one of the great Scots of his generation in pioneering forms of urban renewal and countryside management.

Tindall came of a family of civil engineers and builders. After Uppingham he read History at Clare College, Cambridge, taking as his special subject the years 1293-1301, the period that saw the growth of towns at the expense of the feudal system, and when the Second World War came he went straight into the Army.

He enlisted in the Rifle Brigade as a private, was sent to the Eighth Army and commissioned into the Sudan Defence Force. Their military function was to provide cover and supply lines in south Cyrenaica, Libya, and in particular to provide supply points for the circumventing surprise attack on Benghazi. Tindall served in the Eighth Army from the Egyptian border, across North Africa, and up to the spine of Italy.

He was notably reticent about his military exploits, but his defining moment came in the freezing winter of 1945 when he was Major in charge at Klagenfurt. Wood was desperately needed to keep the population and the soldiers warm. He gave orders for trees to be felled. Within hours, an Austrian presented himself: "Sir, I am a forestry commissioner of the oldest forestry authority in Europe, that of the Habsburgs. Please do not cut those young trees, they are not sufficiently mature. I shall show you better, mature trees 20 kilometres away, which you should cut." He did. Tindall was converted both to forestry management and planning. Years later he was to be a founding father of Central Scotland Woodlands, now a hugely successful environmentally conscious organisation, and of the Scottish Countryside Commission.

Having gained a diploma with distinction from the School of Planning in London he worked for two years with Berthold Lubetkin on the social and economic aspects of the master plan for the new town of Peterlee in County Durham. There was a row and he resigned with Lubetkin and the rest of the master-plan team.

He had the good fortune then to work with Sir William Holford, Professor Gordon Stephenson and Sir Colin Buchanan, with whom he shared a room at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. They were mainly concerned with the updating of *The Manual for the Redevelopment of Town Centres*, originally written in 1946 by Mary Miller, his wife-to-be, and with approving, after much modification, plans for rebuilding bombed city centres. (Mary Miller's first impression of Major Tindall was of his wearing a waistcoat and carrying an umbrella which she considered most unsuitable for a student; his was the first girl he had seen wearing the "New Look" - a long brown suit acquired in Canada while in Britain clothes were still rationed.)

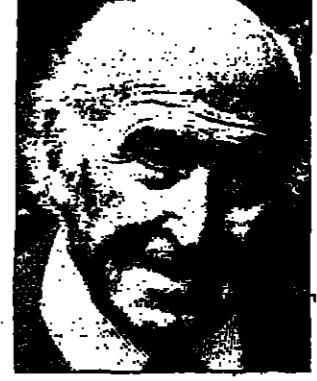
On the advice of Sir Frank Mears, the son-in-law of Sir Patrick Geddes who was their consultant, the East Lothian councillors appointed Tindall in 1950 as their director of planning. There were then only 18 qualified town planners working in Scotland; now there are 1,800.

The only concern that the East Lothian selection committee expressed over his appointment was how long the young graduate bachelor would stay. Tindall, who had a wry sense of humour, said that he would stay long enough to make it "worthwhile for us both".

In the 1950s there were three large collieries in East Lothian, two on the coast at Prestongrange, employing 654 miners, and Preston Links, where Cockenzie power station now stands, employing 836 miners, and one on the Fife, south of Tranent, employing 595 miners, where the Inveresk research station was built. Tindall persuaded the National Coal Board to landscape this area, and demonstrated how the old scarred areas of the Scottish coalfield could be restored into good, beautiful countryside.

When he moved into East Lothian memory was still fresh of the catastrophic flood of 1948 when the River Tyne lapped at the doorstep of the Town House in Haddington. The survey report examined the river, its history of flooding and the sources of its pollution. In the 1950s most settlements and industries discharged through grossly overloaded septic tanks into the Tyne or its tributaries. By constant persuasion of the personnel of the Lothian Purification Board, Tindall transformed the situation. The Tyne now supports good fish and bird life with salmon and kingfishers as far upstream as Pencraigland.

With difficulty Tindall persuaded the water authorities to lengthen their marker boards to measure the optimum flood flows as well as the maximum flows which were their main concern. This innovation was to be of particular interest after the flooding in 1956. Tindall mapped the extent of the flood plain along the Tyne and then made it possible for any county planning committee to refuse consent for new buildings on it.



Tindall: "inspirational"

also recommended that floor levels of restored or extended buildings should be one foot above the 1956 flood level.

Tindall's greatest legacy was perhaps in the many young planners and architects who came under his influence and went out to other authorities with the ideas they had learnt from him. George MacNeill, now Director of Planning for West Lothian, describes him as "inspirational".

After Tindall's retirement he threw himself into the work of the National Trust for Scotland and the Lothians Historic Buildings Trust. His autobiography will, I hope, be published. It tells of the pioneering days when there was more construction than there has ever been before or since, and, with the disasters of the 1930s still in mind, great public support for the concept of planning. "It was a time," Tindall writes, "when one could stretch the limits of planning to cover all aspects of the environment... embracing Folk - Work - Place" in the tradition of his hero Sir Patrick Geddes.

Tam Dalyell

Frank Purser Tindall, planner; born Englefield Green, Surrey 21 January 1919; Planning Officer, East Lothian County Council 1950-75; OBE 1969; Director of Physical Planning, Lothian Regional Council, 1975-85; married 1951 Mary Miller (two sons, one daughter); died Inverness 11 March 1998.

The only concern that the East Lothian selection committee expressed over his appointment was how long the young graduate bachelor would stay. Tindall, who had a wry sense of humour, said that he would stay long enough to make it "worthwhile for us both".

Since the scheme of the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 was to make sentences in default to be served consecutively, where a judge had ordered that the time for payment of a confiscation order was to be the

length of a defendant's prison sentence, the default sentence came into effect on the date on which the defendant was released on licence and not the date on which the sentence was due to be completed had there been no parole. This problem would be avoided by judges stating a specific date by which payment was to be made when making a confiscation order under s6(1) of the 1986 Act.

BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR, JEREMY WARNER
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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

City wary after borrowing forecast

By Lea Paterson

CITY experts gave a cautious welcome yesterday to reports that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is set to announce better-than-expected figures on Government borrowing when he makes his pre-budget report.

The Chancellor is expected to confirm that the public sector borrowing requirement

(PSBR) is falling sharply and that the government is forecast to become a net repayer of debt in the 1999-2000 tax year. This would lie towards the optimistic end of forecasts made by the Chancellor in his November pre-budget report.

Sirazon Briscoe, of Nikko Europe, said that although forecasts of a surplus in public finances in 1999 to 2000 could improve market sentiment,

"there is a deeply held cynicism in the City about 'year-plus-one' forecasts". However, Mr Briscoe added that if the Chancellor were to forecast a surplus for the coming tax year "that would be deeply interesting".

The main impact of a surplus in the tax year 1998 to 1999 would be on market sentiment, according to Mr Briscoe, who said: "It would greatly increase the feelgood factor".

He added that better-than-expected public finances could also lift the bond and the equity markets. If the PSBR is less than forecast, this reduces the value of bonds that the Government is forced to issue. This fall in supply would push up their price. And a rise in the bond markets of this type would also lift the stock market.

However, he warned that any movements in the markets

would probably be limited. Any likely change in the level of bond issuance is small compared to the large stock of bonds currently in circulation.

Michael Hughes, of Barclays Capital, agreed the market impact of the better-than-expected news on the PSBR would most probably be "marginal", at least in the short term and stressed the City would be more concerned with how the Chancellor intended to spend any spare cash.

According to Mr Hughes, the Chancellor could use any surplus in the public finances in two ways. He could build a war chest to finance increases in spending or cuts in taxes or he could also try to move the UK economy towards being a sustained repayer of debt. If the Chancellor signals he is at least

as concerned about the latter objective than the former, this could prompt a favourable reaction from the City.

Mr Hughes believes the Chancellor needs to become a net repayer of debt and to reduce the sensitivity of the economy to fluctuations in short-term interest rates if the UK is to participate successfully in EMU. Last week, the Office of National Statistics revised its es-

timate of fourth quarter GDP upwards by 0.2 per cent. Buoyant economic growth helps the PSBR as it increases the total amount of tax revenues received by the Treasury.

Last month, it was announced that the Government

made the highest-ever monthly repayment of the national debt in January. The surplus of revenues over spending amounted to £10.4bn.

Guru's U-turn keeps market on the alert

By Lea Paterson

WARREN BUFFETT, the legendary US investor who warned last year that American stock prices were too high, appears to have changed his mind and is now saying the market rally has been justified because of low interest rates and the "remarkable" equity returns achieved by companies.

In his annual letter to shareholders in his Berkshire Hathaway investment vehicle, Mr Buffett said there was "no reason to think of stocks as generally over-valued", as long as US interest rates remained low and equity returns remained high.

The apparent U-turn will surprise market watchers who have seen some of Mr Buffett's recent moves into bonds and commodities as a forewarning of a downturn in the US stock market. However, Mr Buffett injected a note of caution, saying the current "remarkable" equity returns achieved by American companies "are not a sure thing to remain at, or even near, their current levels".

Mr Buffett's new stance follows his declaration in his 1996 shareholders' letter that the US stock market was "overheated and that Berkshire had risked paying too much for 'virtually all stocks'." Since then, the value of the Dow Jones Industrial Average - the leading indicator of the US stock market - has risen by around a third.

Revelations last autumn that Mr Buffett had been buying up US bonds, coupled with news last month that Berkshire Hathaway had bought up a fifth of the world's annual silver supply, convinced many observers that Mr Buffett was anticipating the end of the

Surprisingly, McDonalds - one of Mr Buffett's favourite stocks - did not feature in the list of "major investees". However, Mr Buffett's letter contained no indication of whether Berkshire had, in fact, reduced its McDonalds stake. In 1996, Berkshire held 4.3 per cent of McDonalds.

Mr Buffett's letter ends with his invitation to shareholders to attend Berkshire's annual general meeting (AGM) in Omaha. Shareholders are also invited to eat with Mr Buffett on the eve of the AGM at Gorat's - his favourite steakhouse. After dinner, shareholders are asked to accompany Mr Buffett to a local Dairy Queen, a fast food chain - which Mr Buffett took control of earlier this year.



Warren Buffett: "No reason to think of stocks as generally over-valued"

ICI agrees huge severance deals for Scottish workers

By Barrie Clement

Labour Editor

guarantee a full pensionable wage.

Union officials will seek to emulate the package elsewhere and other companies will come under pressure to match it.

Fred Higgs, a national official with the Transport and General Workers' Union, described the deal as "uniquely beneficial". He said the relative generosity of the agreement reflected the fact that the plant at Cargenbridge in Dumfries, which makes polypropylene, was remote from job opportunities.

The few jobs on offer locally paid far less than the average £20,000 a year the 200 workers earned. He said, however, that the union would be looking for similar agreements where there

were ICI plant closures and where unemployment was high.

The shutdown of the Dumfries works is part of the chemical giant's strategy of moving away from lower margin bulk chemicals to specialise in more profitable sectors such as coatings and speciality chemicals.

The company has already sold its Melinex plant in the Dumfries area, which employs 600, to DuPont. It was followed by the disposal of the more modern of its two polypropylene plants at Cargenbridge, to UCB of Belgium.

The polypropylene works which is being closed was loss-making and it is the first plant where the ICI reorganisation has caused compulsory redundancies. Some 85 of the

employees were transferred to UCB where pay and conditions will be protected for at least four years and where a mirror-image of the ICI pension scheme has been established.

All staff have been promised that no one will be forced to leave ICI employment until the end of the year and that no one will receive less than £10,000 in pay-offs.

Mr Higgs, who negotiated the package, said it demonstrated that where there was a will on both sides it was possible to design a deal to suit local needs. "No one is entirely happy with the deal because they were hoping to work for ICI until they retired, but we had to acknowledge that the site was making losses."

Irish alarm after punt is revalued

By Lea Paterson

IRISH manufacturers and economists yesterday expressed disquiet following the surprise weekend revaluation of the Irish punt against the German mark.

On Saturday, the European Union increased the value of the punt against the mark by 3 per cent.

The punt's central pivot point in the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM) is now DM2.48. Previously, it was DM2.41.

On Friday, the punt was trading at DM2.5, prompting economists to claim the European Union (EU) may not have raised the punt's value by enough. Economists are concerned that financial markets may not see the revaluation as credible.

Jim Power, of Bank of Ireland Group Treasury, said: "They [the EU] should have done it much more aggressively. A 3 per cent revaluation will achieve absolutely nothing."

Commerzbank recruiting

COMMERZBANK, a leading German bank, has launched a major recruitment drive in the London equities market to build up a 300-strong team by the end of 1998. A spokesperson said yesterday: "We have been building our equities team especially vigorously for the last couple of months."

Nike cuts 450 jobs

NIKE, the United States training shoe and clothing company is to cut 450 jobs in the US with further cuts expected elsewhere. A further announcement is planned later this week.

Smiths names new head

SMITHS Industries, the engineering group, is expected to name Keith Orrell-Jones as its new chairman when it reports its interim results this week. Mr Orrell-Jones is currently chief executive of Blue Circle and has been on the Smiths board for six years.

Arsenal aims at Wembley

FOOTBALL club Arsenal is understood to be working with property group British Land to win control of Wembley stadium.

BTR offloads business

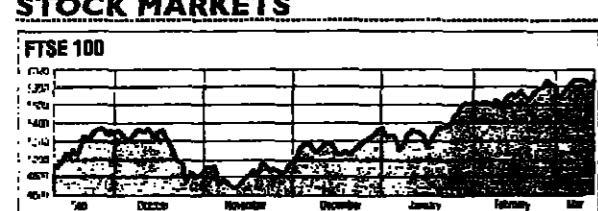
BTR, the conglomerate that is turning itself into a more focused engineering group, is close to a deal with CVC Capital Partners to sell its Australian building products division and Formica, its laminates business for £650m.

Tourist rates

Australia (dollar)	2.3627	Japan (yen)	205.86
Austria (schilling)	20.43	Malta (lira)	0.6300
Belgium (francs)	59.99	Netherlands (guilder)	3.2774
Canada (\$)	2.2640	Norway (kroner)	12.17
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8477	Portugal (escudos)	296.42
Denmark (krone)	11.15	Spain (pesetas)	245.89
Finland (markka)	8.8955	South Africa (rand)	7.7884
France (francs)	9.7397	Sweden (kroner)	12.91
Germany (marks)	2.9466	Switzerland (francs)	2.3749
Greece (drachma)	460.91	Turkey (lira)	364.059
Hong Kong (\$)	12.29	USA (\$)	1.5989
Ireland (pounds)	1.1681		
Italy (lira)	2.873		

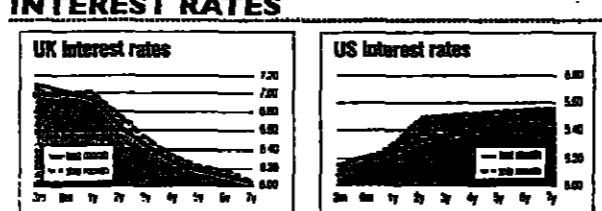
Rates for indication purposes only

STOCK MARKETS



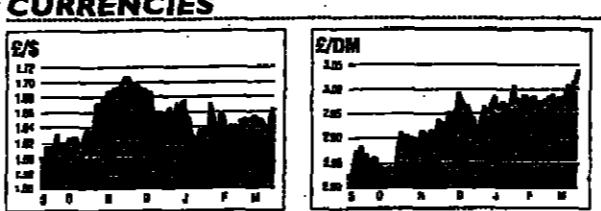
Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	1385.70	6.00	0.44	1378.70	1225.20	3.27
FTSE AIM	1031.50	9.50	0.93	1133.90	965.90	1.07
Dow Jones	8622.52	-57.04	-0.66	8666.19	8356.78	1.02
Nikkei	17081.14	484.92	2.93	20610.79	14668.21	0.95
Hong Kong	11057.03	154.56	1.42	16920.31	7909.13	3.46
Daikin	4889.65	50.05	1.03	4865.72	3192.33	1.54

INTEREST RATES



Name	Rate	Rate 6m	Rate 12m	Rate 1yr	Rate 2yr	Rate 3yr	Rate 5yr	Rate 10yr	Rate 30yr
UK Interest rates	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
US Interest rates	6.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Money Market Rates	UK	7.55	7.50	7.53	0.84	5.95	-1.98	5.95	-1.93
	US	5.69	0.13	5.78	-0.25	5.98	-1.12	5.90	-1.06
	Japan	0.70	0.19	0.68	0.10	1.81	-0.63	2.41	-1.69
	Germany	3.51	0.25	3.72	0.33	4.68	-0.03	5.45	-1.05
Bond Yields	10 yrs	1.30	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
	30 yrs	2.00	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95

CURRENCIES



Close	Day	1w	1m	1y	3y	5y	10y	30y
Euro (\$)	1.1755	+0.004	1.1755	1.				

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Please telephone 0171 831 2000 or write to Penny Stevenson, David Buckley or Nicky Russell (Practice), Catherine Brown or Guy Moran (Industry) or Ruth Talboys (Contract positions) at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN. Fax: 0171 405 2936

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Please telephone 0171 831 2000 or write to Penny Stevenson, David Buckley or Nicky Russell (Practice), Catherine Brown or Guy Moran (Industry) or Ruth Talboys (Contract positions) at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN. Fax: 0171 405 2936

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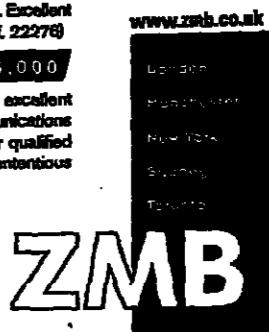
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Human rights: worth a battle?

British lawyers are trying to secure fairness and justice abroad.

Marie Ryan asks if they are succeeding

SOLICITOR Louise Christian had already carried out trial observations in Turkey and Slovenia when she agreed to join a human rights delegation to south-east Turkey in 1992. But she had no idea how profoundly she was to be affected by this mission.

It was Navros - Kurdish New Year - an annual collision of Kurdish cultural celebration with the might of the Turkish military, with the human rights of the Kurds invariably coming off second-best. Along with Lord Avebury and several other observers, and in the company of Kurdish MP Leyla Zana, Ms Christian was there to act as an independent witness to events that would later be catalogued in an official report.

"We interviewed women and children with gunshot wounds, which was upsetting enough, but the killings continued while we were there." She recalls a series of disturbing events: the funeral march where all the mourners were arrested, one of whom subsequently died in custody; the five-year-old boy shot by the police during a demonstration in Diyarbakir, and the village where they witnessed bodies being pulled from a mass grave.

Louise Christian is one of a number of British lawyers who regularly carry out trial observations and missions to countries with human rights problems. While some, like her, have a background in civil liberties casework or human rights law, they come from all fields of practice.

The Bar Human Rights Committee was set up in 1991 and currently has around 30 committee members and a few dozen supporters. Its broad human rights remit includes assisting lawyers in foreign countries who, in carrying out their work, face persecution from the authorities. Barristers sent to observe trials receive no reimbursement other than the cost of the flight and, in some cases, hotel accommodation.

In 1994 the committee sent Joanna Glynn to Kenya to observe the trial of Koigi Wa Wanwere, arrested on trumped-up charges of robbery with violence and facing a possible death sentence. An Amnesty prisoner of conscience, his case attracted international interest.

So how much difference did the presence of international observers like herself make? "Some of us feel that we positively influenced the outcome. He was charged with robbery with violence, which carries a mandatory death penalty, but he was convicted of robbery without the violence element, which was inconceivable on the basis of the evidence. Either the magistrate believed the evidence or he didn't, so it was a surprise verdict."

Nicholas Stewart QC, chairman of the Bar Human Rights Committee, admits that measuring the effectiveness of missions and trial observations is difficult. "Lawyers in the countries we visit always tell us it does make some difference. At the very least, it supports and

boosts morale for those working for human rights inside those countries."

Most missions result in a detailed report examining the ways the country under examination is failing to meet agreed international human rights standards. These reports are then distributed to MPs, government departments, the media and the foreign government under scrutiny. In the case of Turkey, before its application for admission to the European Union was rejected, they were also sent to the Council of Europe.

The Law Society has an international human rights working party which also sends lawyers abroad to investigate. Like the Bar Human Rights Committee, its focus is on upholding the rule of law and international legal standards, with particular emphasis on supporting lawyers under threat.

Not all investigations are carried out abroad. For example, explains solicitor Jane Deighton, it conducted an inquiry into the death of Northern Ireland solicitor Patrick Finucane, murdered by a Loyalist paramilitary group in 1989 after receiving death threats.

Solicitor Michael Ellman is now semi-retired but continues to carry out missions and trial observations. A background in general, matrimonial and immigration law with mainly French clients has been balanced by a long-term interest in human rights. As well as being a member of the Liberty executive committee, he is vice-president of the Paris-based International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) and has undertaken a number of missions for Amnesty International.

Two years ago he went to the

newly-established Palestinian territories to monitor the elections as part of an EU team. "It was very exciting, the people were tremendously enthusiastic, they thought that peace was coming, and that it was really going to work. Unfortunately

account of their very different cultures and ways of doing things. That's a very dangerous argument. The human rights movement believes in the universality of human rights. Of course, one has to take into account cultural factors. But no

Louise Christian believes more reciprocity would be better for all concerned. "I would like to see far more human rights missions from other countries to this country, and to Northern Ireland, than there currently are, but I don't think that being a Third-World country gives you a licence to break international conventions on the way in which a trial should be conducted."

Law Society member Jane Deighton admits that trial observations are limited in what they can achieve, and in recognition of this the Law Society has expanded the brief given to solicitors to include an examination of the wider background against which a trial takes place.

"so that the involvement of the Law Society is more profound rather than just a person sitting in court". Louise Christian found her

self back in Turkey in 1995, three years after the Kurdish Navros delegation, to observe the trial of Leyla Zana, the Kurdish MP who had accompanied them in 1992. Zana was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

"I've noticed that people have been released in lot of the trials we've attended, Leyla's trial was the exception and that's why it is the one that affects me the most - she's still in prison."

"It was the ultimate in Kafkaesque legal procedures. Most of the first week was spent reading out the indictment - a political diatribe of the most extraordinary nature. Allegations included things like meeting President Mitterrand, giving interviews to American television, and wearing Kurdish colours in parliament. Things that we take for granted in our country are described as crimes in Turkey."



Face of a struggle: Aung San Suu Kyi leads the fight for rights in Burma. Opposition groups have long been subjected to cruel oppression

Murdoch

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How to rescue toads in a hole



Hop to it: The search is on for stranded frogs and toads and when sewage treatment technician Mike Oakley (below) has a handful they are bailed to a safer, and more fragrant, watery abode.

Photographs: David Rose



Nicholas Schoon finds sewage workers saving thousands of amorous amphibians

FROGS and toads are on the move at this time of year, heading for ponds and other watery places to breed. Most of us now know that thousands get squashed as they try to cross busy roads. Toad patrols spring up, with volunteers plucking them off the highway and carrying them over.

Several very small under-road tunnels have been built around the country so they can head towards their mating and spawning grounds safely.

But they face another peril; huge numbers of them get washed down the drains whenever there is heavy rain. There has been plenty of that this March.

At Severn Trent's Netherbridge treatment works near Gloucester, sympathetic sewage workers have set up a rescue patrol for amphibians which have fetched up in the settlement tanks there after a long, underground journey.

The smooth, vertical walls of the tanks stop the creatures from escaping.

They face certain death when they are moved on to the next



Frog facts

- Frog numbers are currently declining in over 140 countries
- Drought is the single biggest influence on frog numbers, as they lay their eggs and develop their young in water.
- Frog secretions may hold the key to curing ailments from stomach ache to schizophrenia. A painkiller 200 times as strong as morphine has been found in frog skin.
- Frog bones form a new ring every year when the frog is hibernating.
- Some frogs can survive well below freezing. The grey tree frog can survive even though its heart stops, by making its own body antifreeze.
- Frogs can jump up to 20 times their own body length in a single leap. The South American sharp-nosed frog has the world record - 10.3m.

stage of sewage processing. So the human volunteers cycle round the large works beside the River Severn, looking for victims. Then they scoop the amphibians out of the tanks and take them to a wetland conservation area on site.

Eventually they are released in the surrounding countryside.

Netherbridge's manager, Derrick Sorrell, says that more than 2,000 are thus saved in a year.

INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

Jongleurs Comedy Clubs 2 for 1 ticket offer

In association with Guinness

The Independent and Independent on Sunday are giving readers the opportunity to enjoy the Jongleurs experience. We have arranged for a special 2 for 1 deal whereby readers will be entitled to one free ticket for each ticket purchased. The free ticket is to the same value as the bought ticket and for the same show. Also included will be free membership to Jongleurs Comedy Clubs worth £5.

Jongleurs currently has four comedy clubs and a further four will be opening soon. The 2 for 1 comedy card will be valid at all venues.

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Opening in Spring/Summer 1998

● Oxford - 3/5 Hythe Bridge Street ● Watford - 76 The Parade ● Southampton - 2/4 High Street ● Nottingham - Castle Wharf, Canal Street

How to apply

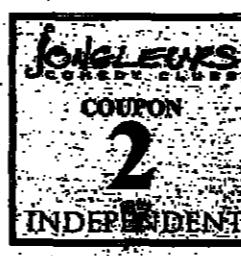
Simply collect 4 tokens from the 7 we will be printing everyday until Saturday 21 March. Then, together with the coupon we will

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Independent Comedy Offer, PO Box 6066,

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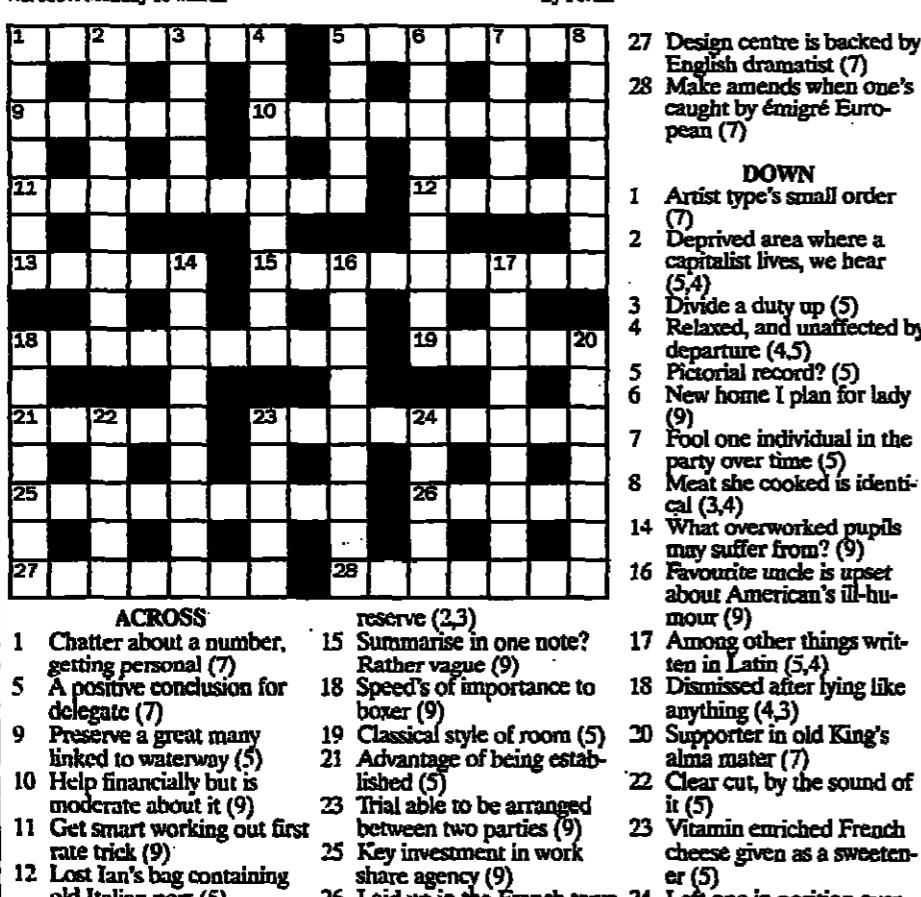


Terms and conditions

The card entitles the bearer to one free ticket for each ticket purchased. The free ticket is to the same value as the bought ticket and for the same show. The card cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. The card is non-transferable. The offer includes free membership for the card holder (value £5). Bookings are subject to availability. The late shows on Saturday at Camden and Battersea are not included in the promotion. Advertised line-ups are subject to change. Tickets must be booked through the central box office on 0171 564 2300. When booking ask for the Independent offer. Bookings are by credit or debit card only and are subject to a 5% booking fee up to a maximum of £5. Normal Newspaper Publishing plc terms and conditions apply.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

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